



THE NOE VALLEY VOICE

Lunny House Demolition Leads 24th Street Revival

By Corrie M. Anders

The demolition of the Lunny House, a century-old residence in downtown Noe Valley, was an event that drew dozens of spectators.

A massive shovel bulldozer and its operator were the first to arrive at the long-boarded-up house on 24th Street across from the Bell Market.

Without much fanfare, the yellow machine chewed up the old parlor and a bedroom of the building. Then it gnawed on the kitchen and a second bedroom, until they too crumbled into dust.

Neighbors, merchants, shoppers, and the simply curious gathered to watch as the two-story house vanished on a picture-perfect Friday morning, June 18.

For some onlookers, the loss of the home, built in 1900, was a sad occasion. For many others, the bulldozer's work suggested the promise of economic renewal along a struggling block of 24th Street.

That's because a four-story complex of six condo-style apartments for seniors and two ground-floor commercial storefronts will fill the now-empty lot. Construction is scheduled to start soon on the project at 3953 24th Street, and it may be completed by next spring.

"It's just nice to have something happening," said sightseer Carol Yenne, president of the Noe Valley Merchants and Professionals Association and owner of Small Frys, a children's clothing store on

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There's a big hole where the Lunny House used to be, on 24th Street across from Bell Market. But over the next eight months, you should see it filled with a new four-story building, offering apartments for seniors and two retail store spaces.

Photo by Pamela Gerard

Don't Let Car Thieves Take You For a Ride

By Erin O'Briant

Dan Hubig's stepson was typing on his computer at around 11:30 p.m. one Sunday night in May. As he looked out the window, he saw his family's 1986 Saab—which he had been driving earlier that day—pull away from the curb. "The

car just drove off," says the senior Hubig. The worst part: An expensive electronic piano that his stepson planned to use for a school performance was in the car.

According to police and crime prevention experts, it's a classic scenario.

"Don't leave *anything* in your car," says Lieutenant Jere Williams, who works in the Auto Detail and Hit and Run divisions of the San Francisco Police Department. Across the board, experts agree that leaving your car completely empty

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Moratorium on Restaurants on the Front Burner at June 9 Meeting

By Liz Highleyman

Some 80 Noe Valley residents and merchants packed a meeting room at the Noe Valley-Sally Brunn Library on June 9 for a sometimes heated discussion of the neighborhood's rocky business climate.

The meeting, cosponsored by the Friends of Noe Valley and the Noe Valley Merchants and Professionals Association, was prompted by a recent Friends survey that revealed, among other things, that residents wanted more high-quality restaurants and a broader selection of stores on 24th Street.

Larry Badiner, director of the city's Planning Department, was on hand to clarify the ins and outs of the zoning law.

In the mid-1980s, fearing that 24th Street would turn into the next Union Street, Noe Valley residents pushed through a moratorium on new eating and drinking establishments, Badiner explained. The current code prohibits any new full-service restaurants, fast-food operations, cafes, or bars along 24th Street from Chattanooga to Diamond. The only way a new restaurant can come in on those blocks is if a current food-serving establishment vacates its location.

Badiner emphasized that while residents can overturn the moratorium, the planning code cannot impose restrictions on quality or variety. "It's very hard to put in a criteria that it should be a good restaurant," he said.

Likewise, it's tough to ban a specific type of retail store. The planning code

Radio Sleuth Captures the Stories of Noe Valley

By Rosie Ruley Atkins

Noe Valley sound engineer Kate Volkman is a good listener. As she walks down 24th Street, she hears the stories of the people who make up the fabric of the neighborhood—the shopkeepers, the people in line at the post office, the panhandlers on the sidewalks, and the coffee

drinkers on benches outside of the cafes.

"It means a lot to people to tell their stories," Volkman says. "It's the way they make sense of their struggles and their travails and their successes."

Volkman, 30, does more than simply listen, though. For the past four years, she

has worked part-time as a project manager for NPR's Kitchen Sisters, the San Francisco-based duo of Davia Nelson and Nikki Silva, whose mission is to unearth audio histories and share them with their radio audience. In 2001–02, Nelson and Silva created the award-winning Sonic Memorial Project, which commemorated the lost lives and neighborhoods surrounding the World Trade Center.

This fall, the Kitchen Sisters will launch a new series called "Hidden Kitchens" in which they will explore the intersection of food and community.

As part of that series, Volkman is interviewing George Sacca, owner of Angel's Market at the corner of Castro and 26th streets, with an eye toward creating a piece that explains the importance of corner stores to the urban experience.

"I've been going to Angel's Market since I moved to this neighborhood four years ago," says Volkman, who grew up in Alexandria, Va. "What's interesting to me is how much people come to count on the market. You know you're going to see George behind the counter. Or Robert, one of the customers, hanging around. It's

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Kate Volkman has her ear to the ground in Noe Valley, recording several local institutions for a new radio series produced by NPR's Kitchen Sisters.

Photo by Pamela Gerard

Summer Calls—Voice Answers

Hark! It's that time of year again when the *Noe Valley Voice* takes a vacation break for the entire month of July. During many of those 31 days, the gang will seek relief and rejuvenation while allowing our mailboxes to overflow and our answering machines to beep on into infinity. In August, we the editors and contributors will round ourselves up, don shirts and shoes, and prepare to service the journalistic and advertising needs of you, our dear readers. Thank you for allowing us this time. We guarantee we'll have a great September issue for you. Just get us your items by August 15.

Photo by Najib Joe Hakim



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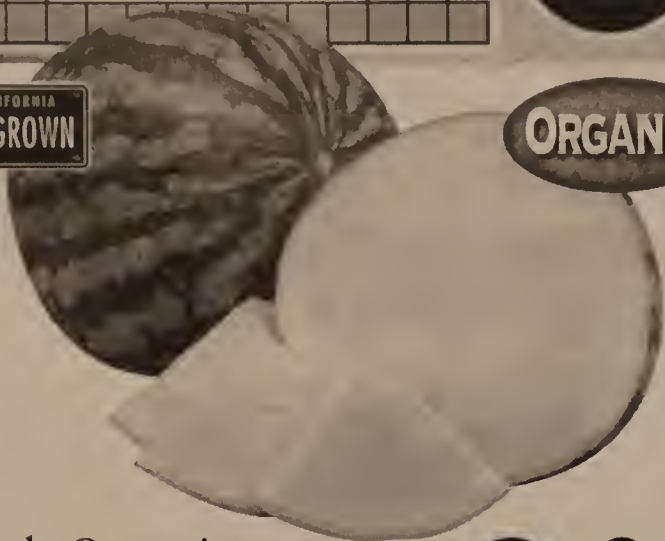
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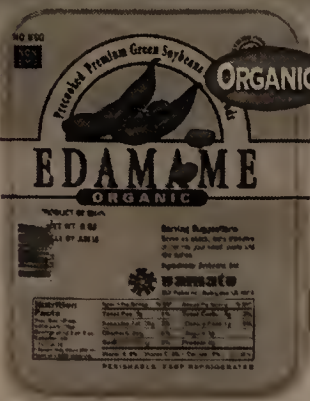
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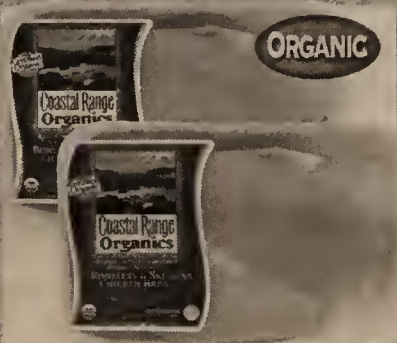
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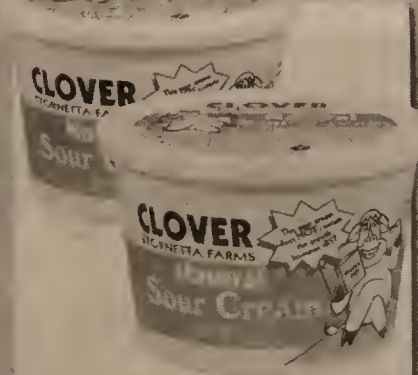
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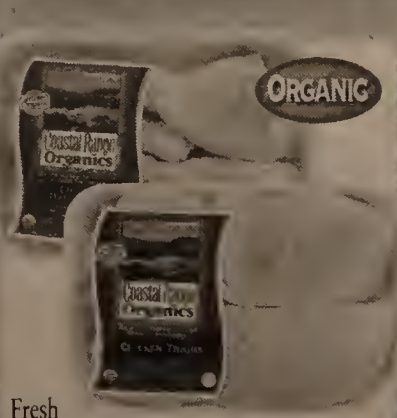
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LETTERS 37¢

Guerrero "Speedway" Too Dangerous for Pedestrians

Editor:

Pedestrians enjoy a lot of respect in Noe Valley because they have asserted their right to cross the intersections safely. Unfortunately, when we leave the neighborhood on foot, more caution is needed.

Think of going to BART. Walking down 24th Street to the station presents no major danger. The cars go fast on Guerrero, but usually they stop when the light is red. Still, check for the red-light runner before crossing.

Now think of another trip—visiting a friend in St. Luke's Hospital on Valencia Street. Walking down 27th, Duncan, or 28th streets from Noe Valley becomes a dangerous prospect because you cross the six lanes of the Guerrero/San Jose Avenue "speedway." Of course, if you are a sensible person, you don't walk. It's much safer to drive and search or pay for parking.

Since people avoid dangerous intersections on foot, fewer accidents occur at these places. Therefore, the city will tell you they're safe. In reality, they're so dangerous they're not used. Some people drive, but what about those people who don't have the option of driving to avoid the dangers of walking?

To their rescue have come some Noe Valley, Mission, and Bernal residents who want to make Guerrero/San Jose safe and usable for pedestrians. Supervisors Bevan Dufty and Tom Ammiano are taking the matter to the Board of Supervisors. I hope all the people of Noe Valley will support these efforts to assert pedes-

trian rights on the borders of our neighborhood.

Paul Nixon
 Fair Oaks Street

Farmers' Markets Have Added Value

Editor:

A letter in your June 2004 issue stated a common misconception about farmers' markets: "Buying direct from farmers should mean cheaper prices."

Buying direct from farmers means fresher food. It means accountability—you can ask the farmer anything about how the food was grown and he will tell you the answer. It means that you are supporting sustainability: local, organic, family-owned small businesses.

How did Americans get the idea that their food should be cheap? A farmer's labor is valuable and deserves to be paid for. He has payments on his land, his equipment, his workers. Agriculture is a gamble in many ways: If nature delivers a huge storm right before harvest, the farmer could lose his entire crop.

Furthermore, these farmers and their assistants are driving long distances to the city to be at the markets. The prices of their products might well be lower, should you take the time and the gasoline to drive to their farms to buy directly from them.

Finally, realize that when you buy your food, you are voting for your values with your dollars. If your values are consistent with cheap food, by all means go to Costco. If your values are consistent with local businesses, family farms, and honest organic produce, you will be proud to

buy directly from a farmer at one of San Francisco's wonderful farmers' markets.

Susan Patton-Fox
 Ellert Street

Give These Manicurists a Hand

Editor:

"Nail-biters" are "not good for local manicurists" (Rumors, June 2004 *Noe Valley Voice*), but something must be.

At Angel's Nails on Church Street last month, while Helen La was giving me a pedicure, she confided that a new shop, Noe Valley Nails, launched June 30 on Church Street near 27th, is the fourth nail shop that her husband Kenny La has opened in the past 16 years—two in Noe Valley and two in neighboring Bernal Heights.

I discovered Helen in that happy time when I lived in Noe Valley, and although I recently had to move out of the neighborhood, my nails and I are cheerfully following her into the new Noe digs. (Don't worry, Helen and Kenny are keeping Angel's Nails, too.)

Jeanne Alexander
 Upper Terrace

LETTERS to the EDITOR

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Residents Let off Steam About Local Economy

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

cannot, for example, allow new bookstores while prohibiting new clothing boutiques.

Badiner noted that the city classifies most businesses, other than restaurants, within the "general retail" category. Interestingly, under the existing code, a butcher can open on 24th Street as a general retailer, but cannot make sandwiches to order. That would label it a fast-food operation.

According to Badiner, residents can change the code by appealing directly to the city or by making a request through their supervisor.

District 8 Supervisor Bevan Dufty, who was present at the meeting, appeared happy to facilitate such a change. Dufty said he recently had a discussion with the owners of Samovar Tea Lounge about opening a Noe Valley location, but the moratorium currently made that impossible.

Upon receiving a request to revise the moratorium, Badiner said, the Planning Department would analyze the proposed change, a public hearing would be held, and the full Board of Supervisors would vote the proposal up or down. The process could take as little as six months, he said, if a neighborhood consensus had been achieved.

But such a consensus might not come easily, judging from the sentiments expressed at last month's meeting.

Some merchants and residents welcomed the vibrancy that relaxed zoning restrictions on 24th Street might bring, but others wished to retain the neighborhood's village-like ambience. Indeed, one 10-year resident pointed out that the neighborhood "has the reputation of being contentious," while others expressed concern over what they see as the "dictatorship of the minority."

Real Food in the Hot Seat

After Badiner spoke, meeting attendees were allotted two minutes each to express their opinions. Among the concerns most frequently cited were the lack of parking, dirty streets, panhandling, and

the need for a high-quality organic grocery store.

Several people shared the view that the real problem with Noe Valley was Real Food. Since the anchor retailer closed its doors in August 2003—ostensibly for renovations that have yet to begin—24th Street has seen a decrease in foot traffic. That, combined with the depressed economy, has contributed to the closure or turnover of several businesses along the stretch in recent months.

David Eiland of Just for Fun said his sales had been down every month since the Real Food closure. "There are just no people on the street," he lamented. Former customers have complained that it's a hassle to come to the neighborhood, he said, and they'd just as soon order over the Internet.

"Customers who used to come from Bernal Heights and elsewhere in the city now go to Berkeley," said Pam Byars, who runs the Ark toy store. "People who used to come to Noe Valley because it was a fun neighborhood don't do so anymore."

But not everyone blames Real Food. "The neighborhood has been stagnant for years," said Vince Hogan of the Valley Tavern. "New people in Noe Valley should have a say. At 10 at night, Noe Valley is dead."

An audience member who identified herself as a new resident concurred, saying the neighborhood has "a lot of young people who would love a wine bar or a micro-brewery, would love to stay up past 10."

But as they spoke, others in the audience could be heard murmuring that they liked the neighborhood's sleepy character.

One resident with a toddler complained that the streets were filthy. Dufty reminded merchants and residents that the sidewalks in front of their businesses and homes are their responsibility. However, he added, merchants and commercial landlords could institute an assessment for street cleaning and maintenance, as exists in the Castro commercial district around 18th Street.

But not everyone was brimming over with complaints.

"Only three stores are closed. I personally do not see that much difference," said 43-year Noe Valley resident Claire Pilcher. Cyclical business downturns are to be expected, she continued, and "it's too easy to get all alarmed over something that may not be that alarming." ■



North Carolina resident Clyde Harris is so fond of 24th Street restaurant Swatdee—and its friendly owner, James Sawatdee (shown with her above)—that she put an ad in her hometown paper extolling its virtues.

North Carolinians Crave Noe Valley Thai Food

By Robert F. Oaks

What do you do when you live in a small North Carolina town that doesn't have a single Thai restaurant? If you are Clyde Harris and her husband Jay, who own two gift shops in the town of Beaufort, N.C., you head for Noe Valley's Swatdee. The 17-year-old restaurant, on 24th Street near Diamond, is about as far away from Beaufort as you can get without leaving the country, but for Clyde and Jay, it's well worth the trip.

The North Carolina couple, who usually attend gift trade shows in San Francisco twice a year, discovered Swatdee through a Noe Valley relative and immediately fell in love with the place.

"It's like a family," says Clyde. "Everyone is so friendly."

Swatdee owner James Sawatdee ("Jimmy" to Ms. Harris) does employ many of his relatives. But even the non-family employees seem like family. Waiter Justin is "awesome," Clyde claims.

As an indication of the Harris' commitment, on their last visit to San Francisco the couple ate at Swatdee eight out

of the 10 nights they were in town. By the time they flew back to Beaufort, a coastal resort town of 3,800 people (and the former stomping grounds of Blackbeard the Pirate), their taste buds could no longer register the local cuisine. Too bad Swatdee doesn't deliver to North Carolina.

Once home, Clyde, who now styles herself "The Thai Toast Lady" after her favorite dish, decided to place an ad in Beaufort's local paper, *The Gam*. She urged everyone in town to visit Swatdee ("The Best Thai Cuisine in or out of Thailand") the next time they traveled to San Francisco. Be sure to "Tell Them the Thai Toast Lady Sent You," she added.

Working in her gift shop, Clyde proudly wears a Swatdee jacket, a gift from James. One of her employees confirmed that they do hear a lot about "that Thai restaurant." Clyde does a little Thai cooking at home ("though not as good as Jimmy's"). The lemongrass she uses was also a gift from James, who gave it to her after learning that her previous supply was lost in a hurricane.

The Harris' don't expect to return to San Francisco until early next year, but they already know where they'll spend many of their evenings. ■



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Demolition Makes Way for Retail/Housing Complex

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

24th Street. "Anything that happens on that block is going to make people feel better."

Victorian Design for New Building

Businesses have endured ill health for some time along the south side of the 3900 block of 24th Street, between Noe and Sanchez streets. The pain started with the closing "for remodeling" of the popular Real Food Company last August, severely reducing foot traffic from grocery shoppers. Then early this year, two former mainstays—Tien Fu Chinese Restaurant and Colorcrane, an arts supply store—shut down. Several smaller shops, including Dharma, Lit'l Lizards, and Wavy Footprints, also closed their doors.

Not only was blight created by the vacant stores, but the Lunny House itself was an eyesore. Its demolition didn't arrive until two years after Jeremiah Cullinane, Denis Cullinane, and Eileen Long purchased the property for \$700,000 from the estate of Robert and Evelyn Lunny.

During that period, the project underwent severe scrutiny from neighborhood civic groups, public hearings, and the city's planning and building permit bureaucracy. "People forget that working with neighborhood groups and all that stuff takes time," observed Long, a real estate agent with B.J. Droubi Real Estate in Noe Valley.

The developers initially intended to build a luxury condominium and retail complex, with a contemporary architectural design. But they modified their



After its demolition June 18, many people stopped by to take a look at the remains of the Lunny House, the dilapidated two-story residence that once separated Tien Fu Restaurant and Colorcrane Arts on 24th Street.

Photo by Pamela Gerard

plans after the project ran into opposition from neighbors and merchants.

The city's Planning Department approved the final design last fall.

"It's going to have a Victorian façade," Long says, which will blend in better with the Victorian and Edwardian buildings on 24th Street. "That is what the neighbors wanted."

Long says construction should last eight to nine months.

Fresca a Refreshing Addition

The razed cottage is not the only outward sign of rejuvenation in the 3900 block. A new owner has started to transform Tien Fu into a Peruvian restaurant. And negotiations were in process late last month for a knitting supply store to take over the Colorcrane location next to the now-flattened Lunny House.

Rip Malloy, a real estate agent with De-

Wolf Realty Co., says he hopes to conclude lease negotiations "any day" now for the knitting emporium.

"We're trying our hardest to get that thing going...and get that block moving again," Malloy says.

Two doors away, an artist's color rendering in the window of Tien Fu depicts how Fresca, the new Peruvian restaurant, is going to look. Owner Julio Calvo-Perez says the renovations will include a new kitchen, completely redone décor, new bathrooms, and a new façade.

The remodeling will take about eight weeks, he says, and the restaurant should be ready to open sometime in late August.

Fresca's landlord, Jane Allen, is also "excited" about the restaurant's pending arrival.

"I think that Fresca should help liven that block," she says. "It should be well received by the community."

Allen, however, is reticent to discuss the situation of another of her tenants in an adjacent building, Fresh Organics, Inc., also known as the Real Food Company. When Real Food shut down last year, the store operators were on the verge of a contentious labor dispute with employees.

"I'm not at liberty to talk about Real Food," Allen says.

Fresh Organics executives have assured the neighborhood that they will remodel and reopen, but so far they have been unable to say when.

Art Supplies Saved for Schools

Back at the Lunny House, as demolition morning wore on, the interior of Colorcrane also was being cleaned up. Art supplies abandoned when the store closed were being taken outside and thrown into a large pile atop the Lunny House rubble.

The Colorcrane throwaways included expensive—and still usable—art paper, which someone suggested should be saved for local school children.

Police officers Jerry Neitz and Ed Carew, who happened to be on the scene, agreed with the crowd that the art paper should be salvaged. So a Good Samaritan collected the paper and promised to deliver it to Alvarado or Fairmount School.

Who knows? Perhaps a young Leonardo da Vinci will rise up the ladder of success, along with the fortunes of a once gloomy block.



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How Residents Can Curb Car Thefts

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

every time you get out of it is the best way to prevent a break-in.

Models at Risk

Criminals know certain cars are easy to steal or break into. Hubig's Saab, for example, has been stolen twice in the past year. Last time, there was no apparent damage to the ignition or windows. "One policeman said he thought there was a master key that worked on medium-old Saabs," says Hubig.

Toyota Camrys are also a target for the same reason. "There are a lot of keys out there that work on any Camry," Officer Williams explains.

Hondas, too, are a popular target, but not because of a problem with the locks. Hondas are often "parted out," that is, sold as parts, which are used to soup up cars for racing. Cops often track the stolen parts down on popular web sites such as eBay and Craigslist. Mid-'90s Saturns, too, are often a target for auto thieves.

"Newer cars—in the 2000s—are more difficult to steal," notes J.R. Hubbard, owner of Selecta Auto Body on 24th Street near Castro. "The mid-'90s Hondas, Toyotas, and Volkswagens are way easier to steal."

The later models have the advantage of improved technology, such as global positioning systems and kill switches, which make it impossible for thieves to start the car, he says.

Who's stealing cars these days? The people who steal and break into cars come from all walks of life, says Williams, but one thing they have in common: They're almost all under 30. "You almost never

see a person in their 40s or 50s who is auto boosting [breaking into cars]," he notes.

Some car thieves work individually or in pairs; others are members of syndicates. "Most of the people in groups are there to part the cars out. We have career criminals who do it over and over," Williams says. "Then we have the people who want to joyride." Joyriding is the motivation in the majority of auto thefts, he says.

Richard Yee, owner of Noe Valley Auto Works, a car repair shop downstairs from Selecta Auto Body, agrees. "These kids in other areas think people in Noe Valley are loaded, so they rifle through the car, take what they can, and rip the radio out. They just abandon the car a few blocks away, usually. A lot of customers find it four or five blocks from where they parked it." Yee fixes cars that have been stolen on a regular basis.

Park Defensively

Most people who steal cars are looking for an easy target. Your job, notes Williams, is to make it difficult so that thieves simply move on to the next car. There are lots of ways to do that.

Jon Shepherd, crime prevention specialist at the nonprofit Safety Awareness for Everyone (SAFE), has made a career of helping people avoid becoming victims of crime. "Parking in your garage is best," he says. "If you have to park on the street, get it in a well-lighted place...and lock it." He recommends further securing the vehicle with an anti-theft device such as the Club, which can lock across the steering wheel or attach to the brake pedal.

Shepherd agrees with Williams that leaving anything in your car is practically an open invitation to thieves. "Don't even leave your laundry in there." If you must leave something in your car, he says, put it in the trunk before you park. "Also, don't leave your car running or the keys

in it when you get out to unlock your garage door."

Shepherd, Yee, and Hubbard all recommend car alarms. "There are better ones now that don't go off when you sneeze around them," Shepherd says. Even alarms, though, aren't always enough of a deterrent, since jaded city dwellers tend to ignore the sounds.

You can help catch perpetrators and prevent future crime by being alert. "If you see someone looking furtively around at cars, or if you see someone who looks like they're doing something suspicious, call 911," Shepherd says. "The cops love to get calls in advance."

Cops and Robbers

In 2003, San Franciscans reported nearly 10,000 auto break-ins and 6,600 auto thefts. Though that sounds like a whopping number, the number of auto thefts has dropped sharply since the mid-'90s. According to Williams, about 11,000 cars were stolen per year in San Francisco in 1995 and 1996. Now the number has hovered around 6,600 for the past couple of years.

In Noe Valley, an average of 11 cars have been stolen every month in 2004 (from January through May). Unfortunately, the May total was 18, which meant that at least one Noe Valley car was stolen every other day.

Asked about the increase this spring, Sergeant Larry Gray of Mission Station expressed his concern and invited residents to attend the next police-community meeting on Tuesday, July 27, 6 p.m., at 630 Valencia Street. "It would be great to sit down and look at your numbers at the meeting," Gray said.

Meanwhile, the police will keep trying to catch the thieves, mainly by shadowing them, says Williams. "We try to see if they are carrying backpacks or something that they could use to break into a car, or if they're wandering around looking into cars," he explains. "Each station has undercover units, and they do the majority of proactive work in following auto burglaries and thieves."

If someone is caught stealing a car, they're charged with a felony. An auto break-in could be a felony or a misdemeanor: If the car is locked and something of value is taken from inside, the crime is considered a burglary and thus a felony. If someone breaks your window so he can sleep in your car, though, or if you forgot to lock the door, the perpetrator will be charged with a misdemeanor.

Once they've caught the bad guy, the cops turn the thief over to the District Attorney's office for prosecution. If convicted, the thief may go to prison for a short while. "The DA's office hasn't been real proactive prosecuting these type of cases unless there have been many instances of the person doing this type of crime," Williams notes. Multiple offenders might be in for a longer prison stay.

San Franciscans can find out exactly what crimes are happening in their neck of the woods by using the San Francisco Police Department's new Crime MAPS system, which is online at http://gispubweb.sfgov.org/websites/san_francisco_community/. "It's brand new," says Williams. "We're still learning how to use it ourselves." Police plan to use the map

Tips for Protecting Your Vehicle

- Always lock your vehicle and take the keys. Never leave more than the ignition key with a parking lot attendant. Lock the glove compartment. Do not hide a spare key on your vehicle.
- When leaving your vehicle, make sure that all doors are locked and windows are closed, including the sunroof. The exception is if an animal is left in the vehicle.
- Never leave your vehicle with the engine running—not even for a second. A stolen vehicle is more valuable if the keys are inside and the ignition is left intact.
- Remove any papers from the vehicle that contain your name and address. Keep your car registration with you and your certificate of title (the pink slip) in a secure location. Do not keep a name and address tag attached to your keys.
- Whenever possible, park your vehicle in a well-lighted area with plenty of traffic nearby.
- When parking your vehicle, turn the front wheel sharply toward or away from the curb and set the parking brake. If your car has an automatic transmission, shift into *Park*. If it has a manual transmission, shift into *First* or *Reverse*. This will lock all four wheels, which makes it difficult for a thief to tow your car away.
- Never leave valuables in your vehicle.
- Check your vehicle license plates daily to assure that they have not been stolen or switched. A little solder or glue on the license plate bolts will secure them solidly to the vehicle.
- If possible, park in a driveway or garage. If parking in a garage, lock both the vehicle and the garage. If you have an automatic door opener, be certain the door is down and locked.
- Replace the old T-shaped door locks with straight locks. A thief cannot hook them with a wire.
- Dropping your business card or other identification card inside your vehicle's doors is helpful to police if your vehicle is stolen.

Source: SAFE (www.sfsafe.org)

to track patterns of crime and better allocate their resources.

For the Hubig family, things have improved slightly. Their car, like approximately 90 percent of all stolen vehicles, was recovered by the police. "I don't know what condition it's in, though," Hubig says. "I haven't seen it."

Plus, the cops have something to crow about—they have a suspect in custody.

One thing Hubig feels certain of, however: The electronic piano is history. ■

A free presentation by the San Francisco Police Department on auto burglary and safety will take place at the Upper Noe Recreation Center on Thursday, July 29, at 7:30 p.m. Everyone is invited.



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Kate Volkman— Listening in on the Neighborhood

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

about a lot more than buying milk or bread. It's where people who live in this part of Noe Valley come together."

Volkman's interest in oral history was sparked one summer during her college years when she carpoled with her father to an internship at a television station.

"He always listened to NPR," she recalls. "And that summer, I completely fell in love with it."

She won a scholarship contest with an essay about her radio dreams, and worked as a host of her college's NPR station. Then she worked in television for a few years before she landed a job with *Lost and Found Sound*, the Kitchen Sisters' Peabody Award-winning series on NPR.

One of her first assignments was on the "Quest for Sound" project, in which radio listeners were encouraged to call a phone line and share their audiotapes. In the thousands of responses, Volkman listened to tapes of people singing, recordings of children's birthday parties, and veterans telling war stories. One man shared a recording of his grandfather telling the story of how he watched Abraham Lincoln deliver the Gettysburg Address.

"It was incredible to share that story with the whole nation," Volkman recalls. "The grandfather had only been 9 years old, and he was right in front of the podium [as Lincoln delivered the address]. He recorded the memory of it on a 78 rpm record in the 1930s, and his grandson still had the record."

Volkman says the response to that audiotape was amazing, but listeners also responded strongly to much smaller, intimate stories. One tape that struck both Volkman and the show's listeners was of a man who recorded a harmonica lesson and sent the tape to his grandson who lived on the other side of the country.

"It was such a sweet piece," Volkman says. "The grandfather made different sounds and then stopped to explain how he did it. It said so much about the grandparent relationship."

Volkman has always been interested in



The community feeling at Angel's Market, generated by owner George Sacca and other members of his family, is one of the subjects Kate Volkman has been exploring for a new series called "Hidden Kitchens," airing this fall on National Public Radio.

Photo by Pomelo Gerord

family stories and histories. When she was still in high school, she gave her grandfather a tape recorder and asked him to record a story she'd been hearing for years. It wasn't a grand, epic story of immigration or a defining life moment; rather, it was the story of how her grandfather got his first library card.

"It's the small stories that people tell that convey who they are," Volkman says. "A library card, a childhood friend, a road trip—when people tell them, you can hear their personalities coming out in their voices. Like my grandfather, who always says, 'To make a long story short....' Those things are so much a part of who a person is."

Volkman's interest in family stories, along with a post-dot-com period of unemployment, led her to an independent project she's been working on for two years—a multimedia genealogy of an

Irish-American family.

"A gentleman hired me to capture oral histories of his family," Volkman explains. "His grandparents, who immigrated to the U.S. from Ireland, passed away about 10 years ago, and his family was far-flung. He realized that he didn't want to lose their stories, their histories, so he hired me to record the stories."

The project started out as a straightforward oral history project in which Volkman recorded the memories of various members of the family. But as the collection of stories grew, so did the project. As a long-lost cousin was found and the facts behind mysterious family records were discovered, Volkman's client decided to broaden the scope beyond audio. Now, Volkman is creating a multimedia production, complete with a CD-ROM that shows the entire family tree and a DVD of family photos, maps, and documents,

set to an audio track of their stories.

"This is such an inspiring project, but it's not for broadcast," Volkman says. "This is for the family and their children and their grandchildren. It's such a gift to be part of it."

Volkman hopes the project will lead to more like it. Meanwhile, she's got Angel's Market and a host of other Noe Valley stories to uncover.

"I'm really interested in the people at the [Noe Valley] Post Office," Volkman says. "I might want to talk to them with my tape recorder."



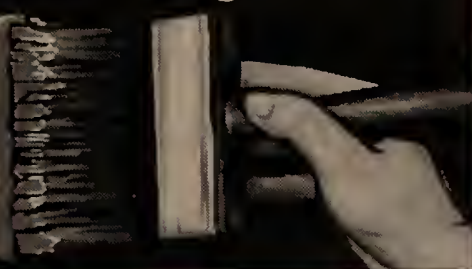
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Return to Strzegowo, My Mother's Hometown in Poland

By Nina Youkelson

IN AUGUST OF 2002, I visited the town in Poland where my mother was born and raised. It is about 65 miles north of Warsaw and is called Strzegowo. Maybe 2,000 people call it home, none of them Jews. All of the Jews of Strzegowo were killed by the Nazis between 1939 and 1945—all those, that is, who hadn't left in earlier years for America, for all those reasons people from all over the world still come here: fleeing persecution, to break the ancient cycle of poverty, and for education and opportunity for their children.

My mother, Feygl Bisberg Youkelson, was one of the millions of Jews from Eastern Europe who came to the United States before World War II. She came in 1925 with her mother, a brother, and a sister. Her father had died in 1915 and was buried in the Jewish cemetery in Strzegowo. So when I went to see my mother's birthplace, I also wanted to go to the Jewish cemetery in the town, to pay my respects to the grandfather I had never known and, more generally, to honor with my presence those Strzegowo Jews who had died during World War II.

In the 1950s, my mother had contacted all the Strzegowo survivors she could find: those who had left before 1939 and those few who had somehow escaped the concentration camps and ghettos of wartime Poland. She urged them to write of their memories of their town and to send her photographs and other written memorabilia of their lives in Strzegowo. From France, England, Israel, and the United States came articles in Yiddish, family pictures, and maps of the town drawn from memory. She published a book of these collected memories. Jewish people from many other towns in Eastern Europe did the same. These books are called *yizkor* books, memorial volumes commemorating vanished communities. My mother also raised some money to have constructed in the Strzegowo Jewish cemetery a small and simple monument to honor specifically those Jews who had perished in the Strzegowo ghetto that existed from 1941 to 1943.

SO THERE I WAS on a hot day in August 2002, at my mother's birthplace, accompanied by a man who wore three hats—driver, guide, and translator—and to whom I was grateful beyond measure for his ability to translate from the daunting Polish language into English. At the City Hall in Strzegowo, he learned with some difficulty the location of the Jewish cemetery, and after walking around the town for a bit—it was too hot to walk very much—we drove through a farmer's field and stopped by a wood, thick with trees. There was no sign of a cemetery at all.

We walked into the terrifically overgrown woods, pushing aside branches and making our way as best we could over uneven ground covered with grasses, bushes, and roots. We could find no headstones at all at first, but after persistent looking while holding back branches, we managed to uncover two headstones that

had toppled over and one that was upright. The Hebrew and Yiddish inscriptions were worn and impossible to read in their entirety. The memorial monument that my mother had had erected in the cemetery had clearly been vandalized. It lay in several pieces on the ground among broken bottles and stones. What an unnerving and sad experience. There had been no Jews since 1945 to care for the cemetery, and so it had fallen into terrible disrepair. And, far worse, the cemetery did not even exist in the memories of most of the townspeople.

Shortly after I returned to San Francisco, I got a call from Barbara Goldman in New York City. Her mother also came from Strzegowo, and Barbara also had been to the Jewish cemetery there. She found it as troubling and sad as I had.

Then she told me about the Polish Jewish Cemeteries Restoration Project, an organization started by one Norman Weinberg of Buffalo, N.Y. His parents had also been from Poland—not Strzegowo, but from another little town whose cemetery lay in ruin and neglect. Norman, after visiting there, contacted everyone in his own family and other “*landsleit*,” folks from his parents' town, and raised enough money to restore and renovate the cemetery. When it was done, there was a ceremony honoring its renewal, and a promise from the people of the town to look after it.

Barbara gave me the address of this organization. I sent them some money and asked that it be applied to the restoration of the Strzegowo Jewish cemetery. To my delight and amazement, a year and a half later, Barbara called again and told me that the restoration was in progress and the date for the ceremony marking its completion would be April 16, 2004. Did I want to go? Yes, of course.

I MET BARBARA in Warsaw on April 11. The weather was beautiful, crisp, and sunny, and the trees were just budding. We visited, the second time for each of us, the walls of the Warsaw Ghetto, Mila 18—the spot where thousands of Warsaw Jews were loaded into boxcars and were taken to Auschwitz and other camps—and other spots designated for honoring both the Jews and the Poles who resisted the Nazis.

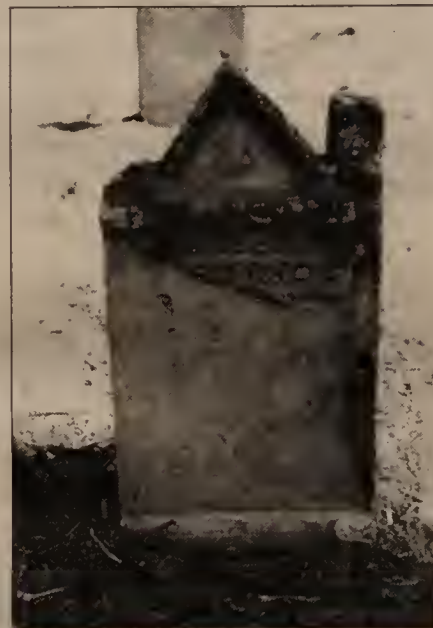
Then on April 16, we were taken to Strzegowo to participate in the dedication ceremony at the cemetery. The beautiful weather continued; it was warm and the trees were beginning to leaf. Barbara and I were amazed to see that there were about a hundred people already there! We certainly had not expected this; perhaps a rabbi, Norman Weinberg, and us—maybe a few more people—but there were so many! A BBC cameraman was filming the proceedings. The local priest, without whose blessing and help this project could not have happened, was there in his long black cassock. About 40 students from the local high school, all of whom had researched the history of the Jews of Strze-



Strzegowo townspeople, including the local priest, helped Nina Youkelson (far right) and Barbara Goldman (second from left) bring the Jewish cemetery restoration project to fruition.

gowo and had written essays on what they had discovered, were there with the principal of the school and their teacher.

A representative from the Israeli consulate in Warsaw spoke. A letter was read from the American ambassador to Poland, who could not attend. A rabbi from Warsaw was indeed there, and alternated with the priest giving blessings. And the mayor of the town, with his entourage of employees, also spoke. There were many residents of the town present as well, especially the elderly people. One was 95 years old, still walking, erect, and



A damaged headstone at Strzegowo.

handsome with a well-cared-for large white mustache. There were many others, also; I never did find out who they were. Barbara spoke too, for both of us, with a full heart. And Norman Weinberg spoke. Everything was translated either from Polish to English or the other way around.

The cemetery now had a new chest-high, cement-block wall around it. All the trees, save four, had been cut down, the lush growth pulled out, the gravestones

revealed and put upright, and the memorial to the Strzegowo ghetto put back together. We placed flowers on the memorial and on the wall. I learned that the Nazis had used many of the headstones from Strzegowo and other Jewish cemeteries to pave the roads or to grind into gravel for construction purposes. Unfortunately, my grandfather's gravestone was not among the few that had survived. The large assembly of people entered the cemetery through the new gates and stood in small groups talking, remembering, discussing, regrouping, and shortly after, dispersing and returning to town and to Warsaw.

The two young men who served as our drivers and translators, Raphael and Tadeuz, best friends and very funny, smart, and wonderful, were also making a video of the proceedings. So we went with them to Barbara's mother's house, which was still standing and occupied, and they filmed Barbara there speaking of her mother's childhood. Then we moved on to where my mother had lived. A much newer house was now on the spot where hers had been, but it was good to stand there on that ground and imagine her life there. She had told me some stories of her growing-up years, but not enough, I now realized.

We all walked down to the little river that ran through Strzegowo, and I recalled many photographs of my mother and her girlfriends, beautiful young women posing among the flowers on the banks of this very river.

This little trip took only six days. I'm home now and my life has resumed its familiar rhythm. But frequently, unbidden, into my head comes a picture of the cemetery at Strzegowo, the few gravestones bathed in sunlight, the four remaining trees dappling the ground, and I know that my mother, wherever she is, is smiling.

As director of the Noe Valley Co-op Nursery School for the past 35 years, Nina Youkelson has had the unique pleasure of teaching several generations of neighborhood families. She is also in demand as a photographer, specializing in black-and-white family portraits. She has lived in Noe Valley since 1975, and has three grown sons and two granddaughters, all of whom are now attending or are graduates of San Francisco public schools.

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The Noe Valley Voice would like to publish your first-person reflections. Mail manuscripts to Bylines, Noe Valley Voice, 1021 Sanchez Street, San Francisco, CA 94114; or e-mail your essay to bylines@noevalleyvoice.com. Please include your name, address, and phone number.



The newly restored Jewish cemetery in Strzegowo has about a dozen surviving gravestones, as well as a memorial to the Jews who died in the town's ghetto during World War II.

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The Cost of Living in Noe

Some Make Do with Half a House

By Corrie M. Anders

The average cost of a Noe Valley home these days is more than \$1 million. That's far more than many people can afford or want to spend.

But what if you could purchase your own place for half that price?

Buyers found the idea especially appealing in May. They purchased 10 small residential buildings—each with two to four units—which allowed owners to split costs but live in their own individual units.

It was one of the highest monthly sales totals in years for properties known as tenancies-in-common (TICs), and coincided with a blistering rise in prices for detached homes.

"When the average single-family home is going for a million dollars, and you can live in a flat for a little over half of that, it allows you to move into Noe Valley

without having to rent," says Randall Kestick, 24th Street sales manager at Zephyr Real Estate. His office supplies monthly sales data to the *Voice*.

While TIC buyers were opting for a more affordable alternative, the sales report showed that rising prices still didn't faze luxury buyers.

A total of 19 single-family homes closed escrow in May, just under the record 23 sold the previous month. Ten of the 19 homes sold for more than \$1 million.

Buyers in May typically paid 8 percent more than the asking price—and that helped push the average cost to nearly \$1.1 million for a detached home.

The most expensive was a four-bedroom, three-bath home, with three-car garage, in the 4300 block of 26th Street (between Diamond and Douglass streets). It sold for \$1.8 million in a transaction that took just 18 days to complete.

Six condominiums sold in May at an average price of \$812,000. The most expensive was a condo in the 1300 block of Noe Street (between 26th and 27th streets) with three bedrooms and 2³/₄ baths. It cost \$1,175,000 and closed escrow in 14 days.



Noe Valley Rents*

Apartment Size	Average Rents (Jan.-March 2004)	Average Rents a Year Ago (Jan.-March 2003)	% Increase (+) or Decrease (-)
Studio	\$ 1,080 / mo.	\$ 1,058 / mo.	+ 2.0%
1 bedroom	1,587 / mo.	1,497 / mo.	+ 6.0%
2 bedrooms	2,121 / mo.	2,145 / mo.	- 1.0%
3 or more bedrooms	2,683 / mo.	2,728 / mo.	- 1.6%

*Source: Rent Tech, Inc. (www.renttech.com).

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Noe Valley Home Sales*

Total Sales		Low Price (\$)	High Price (\$)	Average Price (\$)	Avg. Days on Market	Sale Price As % of List Price
Single-family homes						
May 2004	19	\$699,000	\$1,805,000	\$1,093,158	25	108%
April 2004	23	\$715,000	\$1,625,000	\$1,083,522	34	115%
May 2003	14	\$615,000	\$1,720,000	\$986,464	33	103%
Condominiums						
May 2004	6	\$430,000	\$1,175,000	\$812,500	24	114%
April 2004	9	\$525,000	\$1,040,000	\$738,556	34	112%
May 2003	3	\$645,000	\$900,000	\$793,333	47	102%
2 to 4 unit buildings						
May 2004	10	\$650,000	\$1,857,000	\$1,210,500	29	107%
April 2004	5	\$895,000	\$1,165,000	\$991,800	45	107%
May 2003	6	\$549,000	\$1,720,000	\$1,060,333	48	99%
5+ unit buildings						
May 2004	0	—	—	—	—	—
April 2004	2	\$1,129,000	\$1,405,000	\$1,267,000	108	107%
May 2003	0	—	—	—	—	—

* Data is supplied to the *Noe Valley Voice* by Zephyr Real Estate (www.zephyr-re.com) and is based on all Noe Valley home sales recorded during the month. "Noe Valley" for the purposes of this survey is the area bordered by Grand View, 22nd, Guerrero, and 30th streets.

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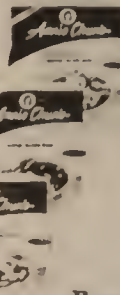
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POLICE BEAT

Police Beat is a roundup of crimes and other police incidents in Noe Valley, defined as the area bordered by Grand View, 21st, Fair Oaks, and 30th streets. The following crime summaries were culled from incident reports filed at Mission and Ingleside police stations during May 2004.

Theft of Vehicle: Between 1 and 8 a.m., Saturday, May 8; 27th Street near Sanchez Street

A 39-year-old Sanchez Street resident reported his beige 1984 Toyota Land Cruiser stolen from near his home. The vehicle bears the California license plate 2JHY435.

Theft of Vehicle: Between 5 p.m., Monday, May 10, and 7:30 p.m., Wednesday, May 12; Elizabeth Street between Diamond and Douglass streets

A Diamond Street resident reported her bluish-gray pickup truck, a 1987 Toyota, stolen from near her home. The truck bears the Colorado license plate 771DKT.

Theft of Vehicle: Between 10 p.m., Monday, May 10, and 10 a.m., Tuesday, May 11; 200 block of Chattanooga Street

A local woman reported her 1987 two-door black Toyota stolen from near her home. The car bears the California license plate 3N02585.

Theft: Between 2:30 p.m., Tuesday,

May 11, and 6 p.m., Thursday, May 20; Dolores and Liberty streets

A Dolores Street resident reported that the front license plate of her 1993 Mazda Protege was stolen. The California plate number is 3FDE407.

Burglary: Between 10 p.m., Tuesday, May 11, and 6:15 a.m., Wednesday, May 12; 300 block of Valley Street

A resident of Valley Street reported that his car window had been broken and several items stolen from his vehicle, including a watch, a cell phone, credit cards, and a driver's license. He also observed that the doors and windows of a neighbor's vehicle were open.

Theft of Vehicle: Between 9:30 p.m., Sunday, May 16, and 7:20 a.m., Monday, May 17; Sanchez and Clipper streets

A Guerrero Street resident reported his vehicle stolen from Noe Valley. The blue, four-door 1991 Toyota Camry bears the California license plate 2XCJ059.

Theft of Vehicle: 8 a.m., Tuesday, May 17; 4000 block of 24th Street

A local businessman reported his gray, four-door 1998 Mitsubishi Galant stolen from 24th Street. The car bears the California license plate 4UDA828.

Theft of Vehicle: Between 11 p.m., Tuesday, May 18, and 8:15 a.m., Wednesday, May 19; 25th and Church streets

A Jersey Street man reported his red, two-door 1990 Nissan 300 ZX stolen. The vehicle bears the California license plate 5EVW010.

Theft of Vehicle: Between 9 p.m., Wednesday, May 19, and 10 a.m., Friday, May 21; 700 block of

Diamond Street

A local man reported his blue 1992 Nissan Pathfinder stolen from Diamond Street. The car bears the California license plate 2YOJ868.

Theft: 5:01 a.m., Thursday, May 20; 400 block of Fair Oaks Street

A Fair Oaks Street resident reported that someone broke into his vehicle, smashing a window, and stole a saw, toolbox, and jumper cables. Police responded, but the suspect was not found.

Theft of Vehicle: Between 9 a.m., Thursday, May 20, and 12:30 p.m., Sunday, May 23; Jersey Street between Noe and Castro streets

A white, four-door 1994 Saturn SL2 was reported stolen from Jersey Street by a Yountville resident. The car bears the California license plate 3FFV690.

Theft of Vehicle: Between 6 p.m., Thursday, May 20, and 8 a.m., Friday, May 21; 23rd and Church streets

A gray 1988 Toyota 4-Runner was reported stolen from the corner of Church and 23rd streets. The SUV bears the California license plate 2HWS384.

Theft of Vehicle: Between 8 p.m., Friday, May 21, and noon, Saturday, May 22; 4400 block of 24th Street

A 24th Street resident reported his blue 1991 four-door Acura Integra stolen from near his home. The car bears the California license plate 2YYZ791.

Theft of Vehicle: Between 8 p.m., Friday, May 21, and noon, Saturday, May 22; Douglass Street near Alvarado Street

An Alabama Street resident reported her white, two-door 1990 Nissan Sentra stolen from Douglass Street. The car bears

the California license plate 2UHH002.

Theft of Vehicle: Between 11 p.m., Friday, May 21, and 8:30 a.m., Saturday, May 22; 100 block of Chattanooga Street

A man reported his red 1993 Jeep Wrangler stolen from Chattanooga Street. The vehicle bears the California license plate 3CCW559.

Burglary: Between 7 p.m., Sunday, May 23, and 6:30 a.m., Monday, May 24; 1500 block of Dolores

An unknown suspect kicked in the front glass door of a local coffee shop and stole \$20 in petty change from the cash register. The owner, who reported the incident, did not think anything else had been stolen.

Theft of Vehicle: Between 9 p.m., Sunday, May 23, and 7:55 a.m., Monday, May 24; 23rd and Noe streets

A 23rd Street resident reported his dark blue 1987 Toyota van stolen from near his home. The vehicle bears the Arizona license plate MTW302. It has a white rear hatch and dents in the body.

Theft: Between 3 p.m., Monday, May 24, and 8 a.m., Tuesday, May 25; 500 block of Duncan Street

A Walnut Creek resident reported that her construction tools were stolen from the carport of a house on Duncan Street. The woman said she found some of the tools, as well as a bicycle, hidden in bushes near the house.

Theft: Between 4 p.m., Monday, May 24, and 1 p.m., Tuesday, May 25; Dolores and 23rd streets

A 30-year-old woman reported that

CONTINUED ON PAGE 21



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POLICE BEAT

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

several items were stolen from her 1997 Mazda Miata while it was parked overnight on Dolores Street. Missing items included the gearshift knob, sunglasses, a gym bag, \$10 cash, and part of the car's interior molding.

Theft of Vehicle: Between 9 p.m., Tuesday, May 25, and 9:30 a.m., Wednesday, May 26; Sanchez and 26th streets

A 26th Street resident reported a blue, four-door 1994 Saturn SL2 stolen from near her home. The car bears the California license plate 4FQX962.

Malicious Mischief: Between 10 p.m., Tuesday, May 25, and 9 a.m., Wednesday, May 26; 1500 block of Church Street

The owner of a popular Church Street restaurant reported that an unknown suspect sprayed the front of his window with

a powdery substance. The owner was able to wash it off.

Theft of Vehicle: 3 a.m., Wednesday, May 26; 23rd and Hoffman streets

A 23rd Street resident reported that her blue 1989 Toyota Land Cruiser was stolen from near her home. The car bears the California license plate 2KZE499.

Theft of Vehicle: 8:40 a.m., Wednesday, May 26; 1200 block of Douglass Street

A man reported his blue, four-door 1987 Toyota Camry stolen from Douglass Street. The car bears the California license plate 4YJJ203.

Theft of Checks: Between 8 a.m., Wednesday, May 26, and 4 p.m., Sunday, May 30; 200 block of Chattanooga Street

A 71-year-old Chattanooga Street man reported that an unknown suspect had stolen a check from his checkbook, which he kept in a downstairs office in his home. The resident said work was being done on his house and the front door was left open for workers to enter. There were no signs of forced entry.

Malicious Mischief: 2:33 a.m., Friday, May 28; 1700 block of Church Street

Police responded to a call from the up-

stairs neighbor of a liquor and grocery store on Church Street. The neighbor reported hearing the sound of a window being broken. The left front window of the store was smashed, apparently with a rock. Police secured the window but were unable to reach the store owner.

Theft of Vehicle: Between 11 p.m., Monday, May 31, and 6 a.m., Tuesday, June 1; 4400 block of 24th Street

Residents of 24th Street reported that their green, two-door 1993 Mazda MX-6 was stolen from near their home. The car bears the California license plate 3EOY505.

Theft of Vehicle: 11:30 p.m., Monday, May 31; 4000 block of 25th Street

A 25th Street resident reported that his silver 1986 Saab 900S was stolen from near his home. The car bears the California license plate IRGJ892.

The Voice thanks Mission Police Station Captain Greg Corrales and Ingleside Police Officer Mike Smith for providing the incident reports for this month's Police Beat. The reports were summarized by Erin O'Briant.

HOW TO CONTACT THE SFPD

Noe Valley residents and merchants are welcome to attend police-community meetings held monthly in both the Mission and Ingleside Police Districts. The next meeting at Mission Station will be Tuesday, July 27, 6 p.m., at 630 Valencia Street near 17th Street. The next Ingleside meeting will be Tuesday, July 20, 7 p.m., at Ingleside Station, 1 Sgt. John Young Lane, off the 2000 block of San Jose Avenue.

Meanwhile, those who live or work north of Cesar Chavez Street (within the Mission Police District) may report recurring problems by phoning Mission Station at 558-5400, or e-mailing SFPDMissionStation@ci.sf.ca.us. To report anonymously on drugs, gangs, or other crimes, call the nontraceable hotline at 558-5452.

Residents and merchants in "outer" Noe Valley—south of Cesar Chavez Street—may contact Ingleside Station by calling 404-4000 or e-mailing SFPDInglesideStation@ci.sf.ca.us.

To report a crime in progress, call 911. (Cell phone users, dial 553-8090.) To talk to San Francisco police about a non-emergency situation, call 553-0123.

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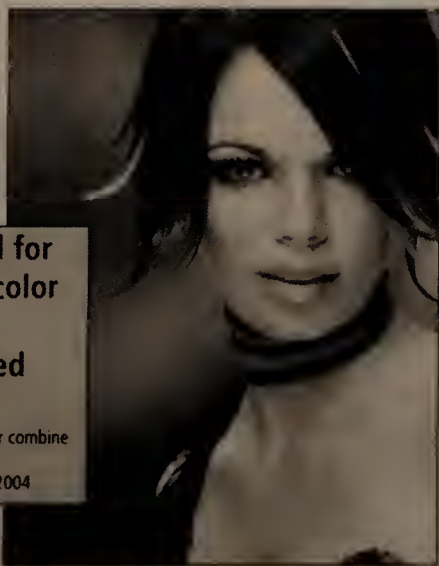
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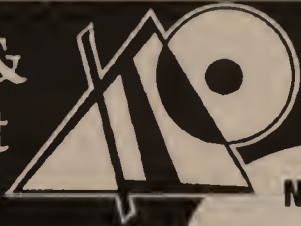
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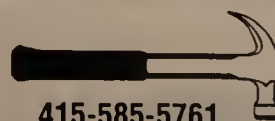
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Seeking Sanctuary 'Under the Tuscan Sun'

Couple Bids Farewell to Noe Valley and Retires to Italy

By Steve Steinberg

A few decades ago, before large-scale tourism and development took hold, Tahiti and the South Pacific were seen as a paradise on earth, the place where the world-weary could escape modern life.

Today, for many Americans and Europeans, the refuge of choice is rural Italy, especially Tuscany and Umbria in the central part of the country.

Among those who have been unable to resist the lure of Italy are Noe Valley residents Stephen and Marilyn Johnston. Last month, Stephen, an architect, and Marilyn, an attorney, packed up their things and left their 28th Street house for a village in eastern Tuscany that they will call their new home.

"We needed to reinvent ourselves somewhere else," Stephen, 54, says.

The high cost of living in San Francisco, especially during their impending retirement, was a major factor in the Johnstons' decision to move. "We realized we could not afford to live like we wanted in the United States," says Stephen. The couple also were tired of the noise and traffic congestion, and the violence plaguing most American cities. Nor did they want to just leave San Francisco for the suburbs, where it might cost a little less to live. "We're not suburban people," Stephen says. "We either like the countryside or the city."



Stephen and Marilyn Johnston's new home is not visible in this photo, but it is nestled among the Medieval stone buildings of Valuberti, a tiny village in the hills of eastern Tuscany.
Photo courtesy Stephen and Marilyn Johnson

Perhaps most importantly, the Johnstons felt that the United States could not adequately nourish their love of art.

"Art is so much more accessible in Italy," Johnston says. "It's all around you. You don't have to go to a major metropolitan center to see it."

Picturesque Village Amid Olive Trees

The Johnstons had been visiting Italy periodically since the late 1980s. On one occasion, following a reader's tip in the Sunday travel section of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, they visited the village of Valuberti, population 20 (yes, 20), located about 60 miles from Florence in Tuscany's Arezzo province.

The couple found themselves "enchant-

ed" with the place, which was replete with olive trees, vineyards, rolling hills, and rustic stone houses dating from the Middle Ages. "It sang to us," recalls Johnston. They decided to spend a month there, immersing themselves in rural Italian life.

The people of Valuberti completely charmed the couple. "They were wonderful and welcoming," Stephen says, "introducing us to all their friends in the valley."

The Johnstons also admired the town's communal spirit. "People share gardens, make wine together, and meet in small piazzas to discuss events," says Stephen, noting that Valuberti was a sort of art colony back in the 1960s.

"People care about each other more," adds Marilyn, who praises the town's strong family atmosphere.

The couple soon became fast friends with the locals, revisiting Valuberti once or twice a year for several years.

Leaving Behind Their S.F. Careers

In the meantime, Stephen continued to practice architecture in Noe Valley, successfully running his own business, while his wife became a partner in a Bay Area law firm. Many of Stephen's projects were in and around Noe Valley, and he prided himself on being a "neighborhood architect." Originally from Boston, Stephen moved to the Bay Area in 1985. Marilyn hails from New Jersey.

In the 1990s, the couple bought a home on Fair Oaks Street and spent five years renovating it in great detail, doing much of the physical work themselves. They sold the house last year in anticipation of the move to Italy and rented a house on 28th Street while they prepared to leave this spring.

During their years in Noe Valley, they really "enjoyed the diversity" of the neighborhood and the city, Stephen says. In fact, he still considers San Francisco the only place he'd want to live in the United States. He acknowledges they're going to miss a few restaurants, "like Incanto on Church Street, but most of all, [we'll miss] our friends and Fair Oaks Street neighbors."

Barn Escapes Being Labeled a Ruin

But back in Valuberti, opportunity was knocking. In February of 2001, an old, uninhabited barn, originally built in the 12th century, came up for sale, and the Johnstons, who did not have children or strong family ties in the United States, decided to make an offer.

Stephen says that while real estate brokers exist in Italy, it is quite common to negotiate directly with the seller, which is what the Johnstons did. Four months later, the five-room, 1,500-square-foot

house, which came with five acres, belonged to them. Stephen says the final sale price was the cost of a good kitchen remodel in Noe Valley. Making the deal even sweeter was the fact that property taxes were only about \$200 a year.

(Before you decide to sell your Noe Valley home and rush off to join the Johnstons in Tuscany, it might be well to note that they bought their property right before the euro replaced the Italian lira and most other national currencies in western Europe. Since that conversion and the accompanying dramatic decline in the U.S. dollar, property values have gone sky-high in Tuscany, with many homes and apartments costing almost as much as in the Bay Area.)

The property's former owner was a German, who had owned the building for many years but had done little to keep it in good repair. "It was almost ready to fall down," Stephen says. The couple bought it just in the nick of time. If it had fallen down or if, say, the roof had collapsed, the building would have been declared a ruin, and, notes Johnston, "ruins are just as legitimate as houses in Italy," especially in the countryside, and are prohibited from being restored.

But before a decrepit structure reaches the point where it is declared a ruin, it can be salvaged. So the Johnstons spent a year and a half converting this crumbling medieval barn into their new home. They hired local stone masons, plasterers, and roofers to do the work. The notion of a general contractor does not exist in Italy, Stephen says. "The owner is always the general contractor."

Modern Perks in a Medieval Setting

The entire project was done in Italian, even though the Johnstons had yet to achieve mastery of the language—"we've studied at City College," Stephen smiles. But architectural drawings are universal, he says. Besides, the workmen possessed such a high level of skill that he merely had to provide them with the design concept and then let them run with it. "They would do things they thought we would like."

For instance, Stephen wanted an arch separating two rooms. The workmen built him an arch, but they enhanced its appearance by using ancient Roman brick found on the site and restored. The workers were true artisans, Stephen says. Plus, all that skilled labor cost only about a third of what it would have cost here.

Although the Johnstons will reside in a structure built in the Middle Ages, they will not have to return to a medieval

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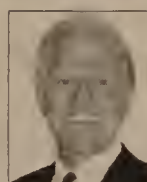
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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 23

lifestyle. "We have taken the old as a device to live in a modern way," Stephen says, pointing out that their new house will have all the comforts and conveniences that technology brings. "We will still have technology, but in a more peaceful environment."

Low Taxes and Free Health Care

The Johnstons realized they would have to make certain financial sacrifices to retire early and move out of the United States. But they felt the freedom they would gain was worth having to budget their spending. They plan to live off their investments, which in Italy are taxed at a rate of about 10 percent. They will also have to pay U.S. taxes, but are then given credit by the Italian government on the amount paid to the United States. In ad-



Stephen and Marilyn Johnston have fulfilled their dream of moving to Italy, where they plan to relax, enjoy the culture, and eat food "without plastic around it."

dition, they will receive completely free health care when they become residents, even though they will not be giving up their U.S. citizenship.

Once they settle into their new life, the Johnstons are confident they will have more than enough to do to keep busy.

"You could not exhaust Italy in terms of what there is to see in a lifetime," says Marilyn. And, she adds, "you don't have to make \$200,000 a year to enjoy the culture. It's just there."

Her husband would like to develop a vineyard on their property and construct

a stone outbuilding. He also wants to grow and cook their own food. "It will be nice to eat something without plastic around it." He says he will not miss "popular" American culture, except perhaps films.

Marilyn, 56, plans to paint, garden, and do landscaping. She also wants "70-something Lucia, who lives at the bottom of the hill, to teach me how to make flat bread."

Most of all, she plans to just enjoy her retirement. "I intend to live my life without a list," she says.

So that she can feel more a part of the community, Marilyn is determined to become fluent in Italian as rapidly as possible. "It's a bit isolating to be an outsider," she admits, "but it can be overcome."

The Johnstons say they have no plans to return to the United States from Italy, although they concede one never knows what will happen in the future. They hope to have a lot of visits from friends in the United States and have drawn up local maps to help guests find their way.

"We have allowed ourselves to make this mindset change," Stephen says. "Everything else will fall into place." ■

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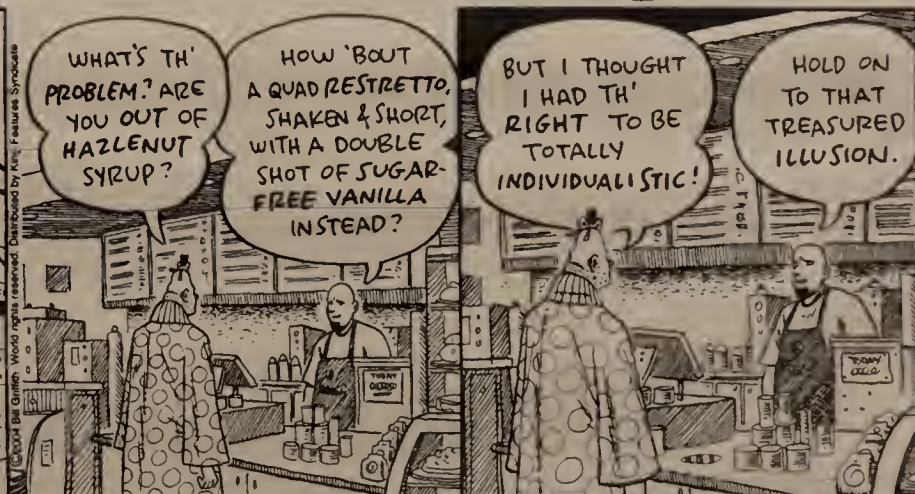
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Photo by Jack Tipple

SHORT TAKES

Good Eats in the Mission

The upcoming "Dolores Eats" festival, dubbed a celebration of life, food, and art, will give fairgoers a chance to hear some great music while feasting on gourmet cuisine. The free event, which is produced as an annual fundraiser by the non-profit Dolores Street Community Services, will take place in Dolores Park from noon to 5 p.m. on Saturday, July 24. Among the event's many sponsors are LYRIC, PG&E, Kaiser Permanente, Pacific Union, and Zephyr Real Estate.

The musical lineup will feature singer-songwriter Samantha Stollenwerck playing her trademark "Cali-Soul," and jazz and R&B vocalist Tim Hockenberry, who has performed with Robert Cray, B.B. King, Roberta Flack, and Bonnie Raitt. Joining them onstage will be a string of other bands, including Mandonna, a six-piece, all-male Madonna tribute band. In addition, there will be multicultural dance performances and booths of arts and crafts from local artisans.

But the afternoon's icing on the cake will be samplings from local restaurants, including Andalu, Last Supper Club, Luna, Delfina, La Moone, Burger Joint, Tao Café, Don Balon, and Ramblas Tapas Bar. A beer and wine garden will also be in the mix.

Dolores Street Community Services, which was founded in 1982, currently runs the only adult homeless shelters in the Mission and Castro districts. The Dolores Eats fundraiser will benefit two of its main programs, the Dolores Housing Program, which primarily serves Latino men, and the Richard M. Cohen Residence, serving homeless men and women with HIV or AIDS.

The festival will be held on the Dolores Street side of the park, at 19th Street. For the latest scoop, go to www.dolores-eats.org or call 415-731-5539.

50+ Acts at Theater Festival

Elizabeth Street resident Bill Schwartz, who breathed new life into the legendary Eureka Theater after it fell on hard times in the 1990s, is now producing the first San Francisco Theater Festival. It will take place Sunday, July 25, and Sunday, Aug. 1, at Yerba Buena Gardens.

The event is free and will showcase more than 50 Bay Area theater groups, including the Asian American Theater Company, BATS Improv, Climate Theater, the Lamplighters Music Theatre, Lorraine Hansberry Theatre, the Magic Theatre, Oui Be Negroes, Pickle Youth Circus, Stage Door Conservatory, and the Oakland Playhouse Improv Troupe.

Schwartz says he founded the festival because San Francisco has been an under-achiever in the theater arts world. "I thought that a large-scale event harnessing the energies of all of the theater groups in the area would be a way to attract attention and lead to increased appreciation and attendance at live theater."

On July 25, the showcase will last all day, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., and will comprise both indoor and outdoor venues.

There will be fare for all ages and tastes, including comedy, drama, musical theater, Shakespeare, solo performances, mime, and improvisation.

On Sunday, Aug. 1, the festival will be dedicated entirely to the San Francisco Mime Troupe's 2004 production, *Show-down at Crawford Gulch*. The Mime Troupe (which does satirical musicals, not mime) tunes up at 1:30 p.m., with showtime at 2 p.m.

Yerba Buena Gardens is located at Mission and Third streets. To see when your favorite thespians will take the stage, visit www.sfttheaterfestival.org. Call 415-543-1718 for more details.

Tiny Dancers Do Hip-Hop and Salsa

Do you have a youngster at home who's looking for a creative outlet this summer? One possibility is the Eclipse Performing Arts Summer Camp, being held for the second year at the Noe Valley Ministry this August. It is a joint venture of Deborah Ben-Eliezer, founder of Eclipse Dance Theater, and Takami Craddock, director of DanEsteem.

"We'll have many different dance forms—from African Haitian, hip-hop, and Chinese dance to salsa, jazz, and modern dance. And we'll have puppetry, storytelling, and mask-making," says Craddock. "Last year, we created an African village, so children learned African Haitian dance along with its history and culture. They created stories in groups and made masks for their own characters. Then they put together a performance for the end of the week. That's the kind of totally involving program we do," she adds.

Camp is for children entering kindergarten through fifth grade. There will be three one-week sessions. All sessions will include drama classes and modern dance instruction. Session 1 (Aug. 2–6) will also feature puppetry and hip-hop and African-Haitian dance. Session 2 (Aug. 9–13) will feature Chinese dance, mask-making, and storytelling. Session 3 (Aug. 16–20) will feature salsa and hip-hop dance, as well as music.

Camp meets weekdays from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Ministry, 1021 Sanchez Street near 23rd Street. Extended day care is available. Tuition is \$205 for one week, \$400 for two weeks, and \$595 for three weeks. To sign up, call 415-550-7915. To find out more about the program, visit www.swivelarts.com.

Artists Speak Out Against Rape

San Francisco Women Against Rape, SFWAR, is celebrating its 30th year as a rape crisis center with "Artists Against Rape," a benefit event on Friday, Aug. 13. Festivities will begin at 7:30 p.m. at the Women's Building, 3543 18th Street, near Dolores Street.

The evening of spoken word and performance will feature local poets, artists, and activists, including sexual assault survivors, who will speak out against violence and in favor of creating a safer community. The event is a fundraiser for SFWAR, a grassroots organization that supports and advocates for survivors of sexual assault, their friends and families.

Tickets are sliding scale \$5 to \$50. For further information call 415-861-2024, ext. 318.

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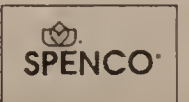
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Sunday in the Park with the Symphony

The San Francisco Symphony will make the hills come alive with music on Sunday, July 11, by offering a free concert in Mission Dolores Park. Conductor Stefan Sanderling will lead the Symphony in a program of classical favorites by Stravinsky, Borodin, Glinka, and Grieg.

Special guest soloist Yundi Li will perform the Grieg Piano Concerto in A minor. Only 20 years old, Li has already appeared to much acclaim throughout the United States and in Europe, Israel, Japan, Malaysia, and his homeland, China. One of his crowning achievements was winning the renowned Warsaw Chopin Competition in 2000.

Pre-performance family entertainment will start at 1 p.m. This will include face-painting, jugglers, food and beverage vendors, and a chance to meet and see orchestra members demonstrating their instruments. The concert will begin at 2 p.m.

So dig out your sunscreen and your picnic blanket and mosey over to Dolores Park, at 18th and Dolores streets. For more information, go to www.sfsymphony.org or call 415-864-6000.

Fall Lineup at City College

Despite budget woes, City College of San Francisco is offering a bevy of classes at its Castro/Valencia Campus, situated within James Lick Middle School, 1220 Noe Street. Registration for the fall semester begins July 14 for new and "readmit" students. (Readmit students are those who have not enrolled in classes for at least one semester.)

If you want to learn a new language, you can choose from classes in American Sign Language, French, German, Italian, Mandarin, Russian, and Spanish. Writing skills need a boost? You can try anything from English composition to short-story writing, autobiography, and poetry.

If you're drawn to the stage, check out classes in acting, character development, scene study, improvisation, public speaking, storytelling, and directing. Budding social scientists and culture buffs can sign up for Linguistic Anthropology, Visions of the Sacred, Lesbian/Gay American History, American Government, Sex and Gender in American Society, Supporting LGBT Families in Early Childhood Education, or Women in Film. Health researchers can take Women's Health Issues, Men's Health Issues, Tai Chi, or Holistic Health Practices.

There are also plenty of classes for the artists among us. These include Drawing, Mixed Media on Paper, Western Art History, and Classical Guitar. If you're career-minded, Career Success & Life Planning or Fundamentals of Public Relations might fit the bill.

The fall semester begins Aug. 18 and

ends Dec. 21. Most classes meet one evening per week from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. To apply, fill out an online application at www.ccsf.edu, where a full class schedule is also available. The college will then send you a registration ticket with a date and time for registering online or by phone. Questions? Call 415-239-3127.

Merchants Launch a Map

The Noe Valley Merchants and Professionals Association is so pleased to have produced an official guide to Noe Valley that the organization, along with publisher Rugged Elegance, is holding a launch party for the guide on Thursday, July 15, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. It will take place at Fattoush Restaurant, 1361 Church Street, between Clipper and 26th streets.

"Our members and neighbors have been asking for something like this for years—a map to show where things are. It's just gorgeous, very upscale and classy," says Carol Yenne, the association's president. "Rugged Elegance already had a guide for Noe Valley with about 20 people on it. We expanded that to include everybody from Café XO, at 30th and Church, to the Noe Valley Ministry to Firefly, and all of our members in between," she adds.

Abed Amas, owner of Fattoush, will offer attendees a taste of his unique Middle-Eastern dishes on the restaurant's patio, and publisher Rugged Elegance will present each merchant member with a copy of the Noe Valley guide. Others can purchase a guide at the event for \$4.95. Subsequently, the guide is expected to be available at businesses throughout the neighborhood.

If you want to attend the launch party, please RSVP to Carol Yenne at 415-648-3954 or to Rugged Elegance at noevalley@ruggedelegance.com.

Showing of *King of the Jews*

The 24th annual San Francisco Jewish Film Festival is coming to the Castro Theater July 22 through 29. It will feature more than 40 films from all over the world, including neighborhood resident Jay Rosenblatt's *King of the Jews*.

Previously featured by the festival in 2000, *King of the Jews* is being aired this year as a constructive rebuttal to Mel Gibson's surprise blockbuster *The Passion of the Christ*.

"I realized that Jesus was a Jew when I was 7 years old, and that turned my world upside down because I'd been raised to think of Jesus as someone to fear," Rosenblatt recalls. "In the film, I use that childhood experience as a point of departure to discuss bigger issues of how Jesus' Jewishness has been minimized and obscured through Christianity."

King of the Jews is an 18-minute documentary. It will be screened on Saturday, July 24, at 2:15 p.m., with Cecelia Lowenstein's *Sorry Judas*, another short film that provides a Jewish perspective on Christianity. Directly following will be a panel discussion with the filmmakers and cultural critic Howard Jacobsen.

In addition to this and a number of other crosscultural dramas and political documentaries, the festival will spotlight a retrospective of Hollywood's portrayal of the Holocaust and several films that address the Israeli/Palestinian conflict.

When the festival winds down at the Castro, it will move on to Berkeley, Mountain View, and then San Rafael, repeating the same roster at each venue. The Castro Theater is at Castro and 17th streets. For tickets or more information, call 925-275-9490 or visit www.sjfff.org.



This month's Short Takes were written by Laura McHale Holland.

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Very truly yours,
Will King



• JULY/AUGUST 2004 •

JUNE 29 – AUG. 2: A NERT (Neighborhood Emergency Response Team) training class in disaster and earthquake preparedness runs six Tuesdays at the Bernal Heights Library. For info call Maxine Fasulis at 970-2024; www.sfgov.org/sfndnert.

JULY 1 – AUG. 27: TERRA MIA offers summer art programs for children 6 to 14. Mon.–Fri., 10 am–1 pm. 1314 Castro St. Call 642-9911 for information and schedules.

JULY 1 – AUG. 27: The Mission YMCA offers DAY CAMP at the Noe Valley Ministry for kids in kindergarten through eighth grade. 7:30 am–6:30 pm. 1021 Sanchez St. 586-6900.

JULY 1 – 30 & AUG. 2 – 31: Chris Sequeira holds classes in Tai Chi Mon. and Tues., 6–7:30 pm, at the Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez St.; Wed. & Fri., 10:15 am–noon, at Upper Douglass Park, 27th & Douglass. 415-773-8185 or 650-756-6857.

JULY 2 – AUG. 27: The House of BLUEGRASS features Dark Hollow on July 2, House of Bluegrass on July 9, Earthquake Country on July 16, the Billy Boys on July 23, the Squirrely String Band on July 30, High Country on Aug. 6, Jeannie and Chuck's Country Roundup on Aug. 13, the Birch Lake Ramblers on Aug. 20, and the Sibling Brothers on Aug. 27. 7 pm. Maxfield's, 398 Dolores St. 255-6859.

JULY 3, 10 & 17: LAPSITS for infants and toddlers feature songs, stories, and finger play. 10:30 am. Noe Valley Library, 451 Jersey St. 695-5095.

JULY 3 & 4: The Fillmore Street JAZZ FESTIVAL features music, art, and food. 10 am–6 pm. Fillmore from Jackson to Eddy. 510-970-3217.

JULY 3 – 5 & SEPT. 4 – 6: The San Francisco MIME TROUPE's new musical production, *Showdown at Crawford Gulch*, is an original fable "about lies, greed, and dirty double-crossing...." 2 pm. Dolores Park. 285-1717.

JULY 4 Yerba Buena Gardens hosts the fourth annual LGBT "We Are Family" PICNIC, with entertainment for kids and families. 11 am–4 pm. Rooftop Gardens, Mission and Fourth. 543-1718.

JULY 4. San Francisco's WATERFRONT FESTIVAL features live music and a big fireworks display. 2:15 pm. Pier 39, Embarcadero & Beach. 705-5500.

JULY 4 – 25: Artists Sam Gordon, Ryan McGinley, and Collier Schorr exhibit PHOTOGRAPHIC-based work. Sundays, noon–5 pm, or by appointment. Ratio 3, 903 Guerrero St. 646-732-2767.

JULY 4 & AUG. 1 Rocket DOG RESCUE will show off adoptable dogs in front of Zephyr Real Estate. Noon–4 pm. 4040 24th St. 642-4786.

JULY 6 & 27: Preschool STORY TIME, a read-aloud program for children 3 to 5, begins at 10 am. Noe Valley Library, 451 Jersey St. 695-5095.

JULY 7: VENTRILOQUIST Steve Chaney and Cornelius Crowe perform for all ages at the Mission Library. 1 pm. 300 Bartlett St. 355-2800 for reservations.

JULY 7: The See Jane Tri TRIATHLON TEAM meets to get the training season started; signups encouraged. 6:30 pm. See Jane Run, 3910 24th St. 401-8338.

JULY 7: BEADISSIMO hosts Anne Mitchell's "Jumprings and Leather Bracelet" class. 6:30–9 pm. 1051 Valencia St. 282-2323.

JULY 7 – 11: A five-day ORAL HISTORY Training Workshop taught by Jeff

Friedman, Ph.D., covers interviewing techniques and editing formats. S.F. Performing Arts Library and Museum, 401 Van Ness Ave. Call Basya Petnick at 255-4800, ext. 823.

JULY 7 & AUG. 4 Visit ELEPHANTS Tinkerbell and Lulu at the San Francisco Zoo before they move to a refuge in San Andreas, Calif. 10 am–5 pm. Sloat & the Great Highway. 753-7080.



The Baguette Quartette performs Parisian cafe music from the early 20th century at the Noe Valley Ministry on July 10. Photo by Jennifer C. Hunter

JULY 7 – AUG. 11: Natural Resources offers a CHILDBIRTH PREPARATION and parenting series Wednesdays from 7 to 9:30 pm, and Sat., Aug. 7, from 9:30 am to noon and 1 to 3:30 pm. 816 Diamond St. 550-2611.

JULY 8: Jennifer Levine performs a PUPPET SHOW for preschoolers, "Dragons Never Laugh." 10 and 11 am. Noe Valley Library, 451 Jersey St. Call 695-5095 for a reservation.

JULY 8 & AUG. 12: Many neighborhood shops will stay open until 8 pm on SECOND THURSDAYS, for after-work or after-dinner shopping.

JULY 8 & 22; AUG. 12 & 26: A NEW DADS support group, led by Lawrence Shweky, meets on a drop-in basis the second and fourth Thursdays of the

month from 7 to 8:30 pm. Natural Resources, 816 Diamond St. 550-8369.

JULY 9 – 17: Artship DANCE/THEATER performs "Same River Twice," an exploration of the search for home by immigrants. Thurs.–Sat., 8 pm; Sun. 3 pm. ODC Theater, 3153 17th St. 863-9834

JULY 10: The Main Library offers a LEGAL ADVICE clinic. Sign up 10:30 am–noon; consultations until 2 pm. Latino/Hispanic Community Meeting Room, 100 Larkin St. 989-1616.

JULY 10: The St. Nicholas Charity Fund sponsors a FOOD SAFETY CLASS and exam, required by the state for food handlers. Class begins at 9 am; exam at 4 pm. St. Nicholas Church, 5200 Diamond Heights Blvd. To register, call Ned Shatara, 252-3849.

JULY 10: In a BASTILLE DAY CELEBRATION, the Baguette Quartette performs music from Paris cafes in the 1920s, '30s, and '40s. 8:15 pm. Noe Valley Music Series at the Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez St. 454-5238.

JULY 10 & 11: The ninth annual S.F. SILENT FILM FESTIVAL features performances by Rudolph Valentino, Charlie Chaplin, and Norma Shearer. Castro Theater, 429 Castro St. 248-9377 or www.silentfilm.org

JULY 11: A NORTH BEACH PARTY benefiting S.F. Animal Care and Control includes live jazz and vegetarian hors d'oeuvres; dogs on leash welcome on front patio. Noon–4 pm. Enrico's Side-walk Café, 504 Broadway. 822-5566.

JULY 11: The San Francisco Symphony performs a FREE CONCERT in Dolores Park. 2 pm. 503-5474.

JULY 11 & 25; AUG. 8 & 22: City Guides offers a WALKING TOUR of "Murals and the Multi-Ethnic Mission"

on second and fourth Sundays at noon. Meet at the Women's Building, 3543 18th St. 557-4266.

JULY 12 – 18: Festival Neruda is a weeklong celebration of Chilean poet PABLO NERUDA, including daily screenings of Mark Eisner's documentary *Pablo Neruda! ¡Presente!* Theater Artaud, 450 Florida St. 621-7797.

JULY 12 – AUG. 16: Abigail Reagan teaches a DOULA training workshop Mondays, 6–9 pm. Natural Resources, 816 Diamond St. 550-2611

JULY 13: Doris Feyling tells STORIES for preschool children at 10 and 11 am. Noe Valley Library, 451 Jersey St. Space limited; call 695-5095 for res.

JULY 13: Meet EXOTIC BIRDS at "Wonderment," especially for children ages 2 to 10. 11 am. Glen Park Library 653 Chenery St. 337-4740

JULY 14: Registration for fall classes at CITY COLLEGE begins; evening and Saturday classes at James Lick, beginning Aug. 18, include languages, acting, writing, and history. 239-3127, apply online at www.ccsf.edu.

JULY 14: Sharon Kinney brings puppets and MAGIC to the Mission Library. 11 am. 300 Bartlett St. Space is limited; call 355-2800 for reservations.

JULY 14: "BEERS AGAINST BUSH/Kocktails for Kerry" at the Valley Tavern raises \$ for the John Kerry for President campaign. 4054 24th St. 206-0231.

JULY 15: The Noe Valley Merchants and Professionals Association hosts a party for the release of the NOE VALLEY DIRECTORY, a guide to neighborhood businesses. 11 am–2 pm. 1361 Church St. RSVP to Carol Yenne, 648-3954.

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· CALENDAR ·



JULY 16: An ART AUCTION, "Art for AIDS," benefits the UCSF AIDS Health Project. 5:30 pm. Bonhams & Butterfields, 220 San Bruno Ave. 502-7276.

JULY 17: The ninth annual BOOKS BY THE BAY features authors, book panels, children's activities, and booths from local independent booksellers. 10 am–4 pm. Yerba Buena Gardens, Fourth & Mission. See www.booksbythebay.com.

JULY 17: A GARDEN TEA PARTY sponsored by the Haight Ashbury Neighborhood Council includes recipes for compost tea for plants. 10 am–noon. Garden for the Environment, 7th Ave. at Lawton. Preregister at 731-5627.

JULY 18: The CORY COMBS TRIO performs Brazilian instrumentals and jazzy original music. 7 pm. Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez St. 282-2317.

JULY 20: FILMS for preschoolers 3 to 5 include *Angel and the Ducks* and *Peticans*. 10 & 11 am. Noe Valley Library, 451 Jersey St. 695-5095.

JULY 21: "TAKE A HIKE" at See Jane Run is a discussion of Bay Area trails. 6:30 pm. 3910 24th St. 401-8338.

JULY 21 – AUG. 4: Kate Macchi teaches a three-part class in INFANT MASSAGE. Wednesdays, 1:30–3 pm. Natural Resources, 816 Diamond St. 550-2611.

JULY 22: Rand Richards reads from his new book, *Haunted San Francisco*, sponsored by the S.F. HISTORY ASSOCIATION. 7 pm. Mission Dolores Auditorium, 16th & Church. 750-9986.

JULY 23: Sha'ar Zahav's FAMILY KABALLAT SHABBAT features a service and vegetarian potluck; no RSVP necessary. 6:15 pm. 290 Dolores St. 861-6932.

JULY 24: A PLAYGROUP WORKSHOP to create a childcare cooperative for

babies ages 7 to 12 months is led by Heather Pierini. 10–11:30 am. Natural Resources, 816 Diamond St. 550-2611.

JULY 24: Sun, Wind, and Water Day explores ENERGY SOURCES through experiments, games, and art, for all ages. 10 am–3 pm. Randall Museum, 199 Museum Way. 554-9600.

JULY 24: An "Epic Mt. Tam Ride," sponsored by the BICYCLE COALITION, covers 45 miles in six hours. Meet at the Ferry Building terminal, 10:30 am. 431-BIKE or bbaunach@addinc.com.

JULY 24: DOLORES EATS, a fundraiser for Dolores Street Community Services, features food from local restaurants, arts and crafts, live music, and dance performances. Noon–5 pm. Dolores Park. 731-5539; www.doloreseats.com.

JULY 24: *King of the Jews*, a short film by Noe resident Jay Rosenblatt, screens at 2:15 pm at the Castro Theater, in the S.F. JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL, which runs from July 22 to 29 at various venues. For schedules, 925-275-9490 or www.sfjff.org.



Artship Dance/Theater performs "Same River Twice" at ODC Theater, July 9–17.

JULY 25: Elizabeth Street resident Bill Schwartz produces the first San Francisco THEATER FESTIVAL, showcasing over 50 Bay Area groups. 10 am–6 pm. Yerba Buena Gardens, 543-1718.

JULY 26: Counselor Robert L. Mueller, J.D., discusses WORKPLACE CONFLICT resolution. 7 pm. Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez St. 282-0395.

JULY 27: The Wildlife Association presents a RAINFOREST PROGRAM for ages 2 to 8. 10:30 am. Glen Park Library, 653 Chenery St. 337-4740.

JULY 28: The BUBBLE LADY will be at the Mission Library at 1 pm. 300 Bartlett St. Space is limited; call 355-2800 for reservations.

JULY 28 – AUG. 1: The 10th annual North Beach JAZZ FESTIVAL features music in 30 venues. For the lineup, go to www.nbjazzfest.com.

JULY 29: VLADIMIR NABOKOV's *Lolita* is the featured title at the Bernal Heights Book Discussion Club. 4 pm. Bernal Heights Branch Library, 500 Cortland St. 695-5160.

JULY 29: UPPER NOE NEIGHBORS meets at 7:30 pm at the Upper Noe Rec Center, Day & Sanchez. 285-0473.

JULY 29: SAUL LANDAU discusses his new book, *The Business of America. How Consumers Have Replaced Citizens*. 7:30 pm. Modern Times Bookstore, 888 Valencia St. 282-9246.

JULY 29 – AUG. 28: Charlie Varon directs Dan Hoyle's comic account of his GLOBALIZATION studies, *Circumnavigator*. Thurs. – Sat., 8 pm. The Marsh, 1062 Valencia St. 826-5750.

JULY 30: Rachel Grimes and Brightblack perform a CONCERT at 8:15 pm. Noe Valley Music Series, Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez St. 454-5238.

JULY 31: BOX SET DUO performs a concert for the Noe Valley Music Series at the Noe Valley Ministry. 8:15 pm. 1021 Sanchez St. 454-5238.

AUG. 1: The San Francisco Theater Festival features the S.F. MIME TROUPE's 2004 production, *Showdown at Crawford Gulch*. 1:30 pm. Yerba Buena Gardens, Mission at Third. 543-1718.

AUG. 2 – 20: Eclipse Performing Arts SUMMER CAMP for kindergartners through fifth-graders focuses on dance—ethnic, salsa, and hip-hop—in one-week sessions. Weekdays, 9 am–3 pm. Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez St. 550-7915; www.swivelarts.com.

AUG. 3, 10, 17 & 31: Preschool STORY TIME, a read-aloud program for children 3 to 5, begins at 10 am. Noe Valley Library, 451 Jersey St. 695-5095.

AUG. 7: SHANA MORRISON, daughter of Van, performs an acoustic rock/soul concert. 8:15 pm. Noe Valley Music Series at the Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez St. 454-5238.

AUG. 10: The New College School of Law holds a workshop, "How to Present a Case in SMALL CLAIMS COURT." 6 pm. 50 Fell St., second floor.

AUG. 12 – SEPT. 5: "MARGA GOMEZ'S Intimate Details" is a "tell-all dedicated to all the girls and inanimate objects Marga Gomez has ever loved." Wed. – Sat., 8 pm; Sun., 3 & 7 pm. Theater Rhinoceros, 2926 16th St. 861-5079.

AUG. 13: S.F. WOMEN AGAINST RAPE celebrates its 30th anniversary with a multimedia benefit, "Artists Against Rape." 7:30 pm. Women's Building, 3543 18th St. 861-2024, ext. 318.

AUG. 14 & 15: The NIHONMACHI STREET FAIR features artwork, live music, food, and the Asian American Bike Show. 11 am–6 pm. Japantown Center, Post & Webster. 771-9861.

AUG. 20: The benefit "State of the Nation" SUMMER ART AUCTION fea-

SEPTEMBER SONG

The *Voice* is on vacation for the rest of the summer, so the next edition will be distributed on or before Sept. 1, 2004. The deadline for September calendar items is **Aug. 15**. Please note that because of a space crunch, Noe Valley events take priority. Our address is *Noe Valley Voice*, 1021 Sanchez Street, San Francisco, CA 94114. Or you may send an e-mail to zabarska@aol.com.

tures works by more than 40 Bay Area artists, works will be on display in the gallery starting Aug. 10, noon to 5 pm. Auction 7 pm. Intersection for the Arts 446 Valencia St. 626-2787.

AUG. 21 & 28: LAPSITS for infants and toddlers feature songs, stories, and finger play. 10:30 am. Noe Valley Library, 451 Jersey St. 695-5095.

AUG. 24: FILMS for preschoolers 3 to 5 will be shown at 10 and 11 am. Noe Valley Library, 451 Jersey St. 695-5095.

AUG. 26: UPPER NOE NEIGHBORS meets at 7:30 pm at the Upper Noe Rec Center, Day & Sanchez. 285-0473.

AUG. 28: FILMMAKER Michelle Blair holds a fundraiser for her work-in-progress, *Carrying On! Jewish Arts, Jewish Identity*. 7:30 pm. Traveling Jewish Theater, 450 Florida St. 695-2909.

AUG. 28: Composer/pianists Terry Riley and Larry Karush perform a CONCERT at 8:15 pm. Noe Valley Music Series at the Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez St. 454-5238.

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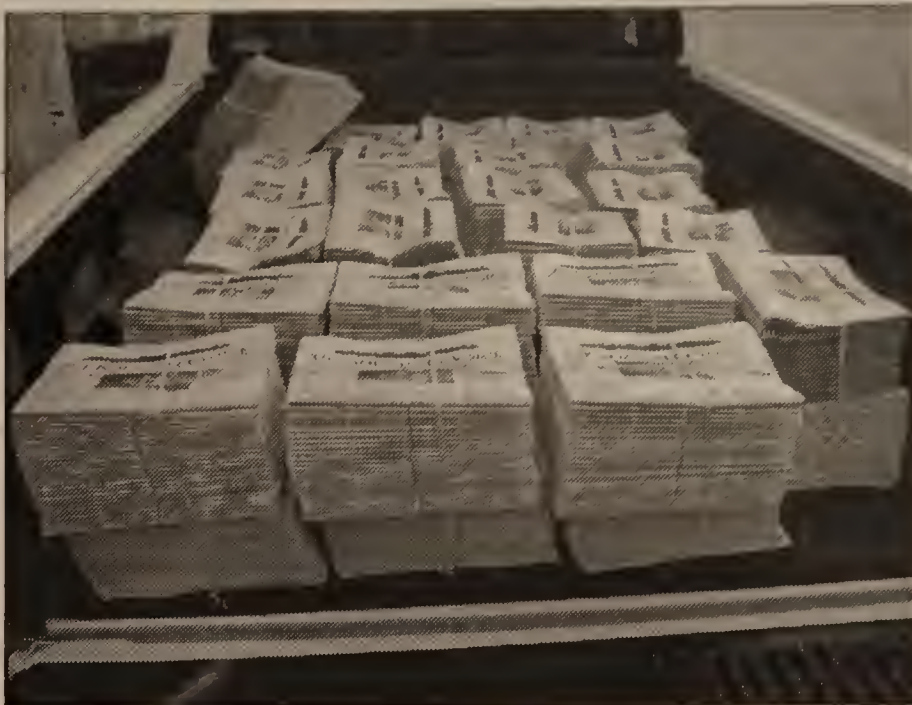
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Photo by Jack Tipple



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For Artists and Photographers: Submit photocopies of work only. We prefer work originally done in black & white.

Send submissions to:
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San Francisco, CA 94114

Please include your name, address, phone number, and e-mail address. Self-addressed, stamped envelope required for a reply.

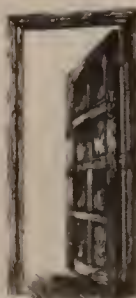
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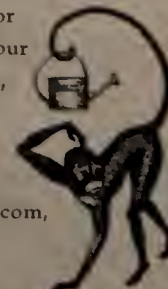


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MORE GROUPS TO JOIN

Advocates for Upper Noe Rec Center
Contact: Greg Clark, 826-6222
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 31869, San Francisco, CA 94131-0869
Meetings: First Tuesday of the month, in the auditorium at Upper Noe Rec Center, Day and Sanchez, 7 p.m.

Castro Area Planning + Action
Contact: Linton Stables, 541-0344, ext. 230; capa@home4us.org
Meetings: Second Thursday of the month, Eureka Valley Recreation Center, 100 Collingwood St., 7:30 p.m.

Diamond Heights Community Association
Contact: Betsy Eddy, 239-5776
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 31529, San Francisco, CA 94131
Meetings: First Thursday of the month, 7:30 p.m. Call for location.

Dolores Heights Improvement Club
Contact: Amy Powell, 647-4228
Mailing Address: 3732 21st St., San Francisco, CA 94114
Meetings: Bimonthly board meetings; membership meetings semi-annually. Call for details.

Duncan Newburg Association (DNA)
Contact: Keith Eickman, 282-8988; Evelyn Martin, 826-6734; Deanna Mooney, 821-4045
Mailing Address: 560 Duncan St., San Francisco, CA 94131
Meetings: Held periodically. Call for details.

East & West of Castro Street Improvement Club
Contact: Paul Kantus, 647-3753
Mailing Address: 492 Douglass St., San Francisco, CA 94114
Meetings: First Wednesday of the month (every other month—call to confirm), Noe Valley Library, 451 Jersey St., 7:30 p.m.

Eureka Valley Promotion Association
Contact: Lion Barnett, 255-3624
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 14137, San Francisco, CA 94114
Meetings: Third Thursday of every month (except December). Eureka Valley Recreation Center, 100 Collingwood St., 7:30 p.m.



Fair Oaks Neighbors
Contact: Pam Coxson, 648-4977
Mailing Address: 25 Fair Oaks St., San Francisco, CA 94110
Meetings: Call for details. The annual Fair Oaks Street Fair is always held the day before Mother's Day.

Friends of Glen Canyon Park
Contact: Richard Craib, 648-0862
Mailing Address: 140 Turquoise Way, San Francisco, CA 94131
Meetings: Call for details.

Friends of Noe Valley
Contact: Debra Niemann, 282-9918
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 460953, San Francisco, CA 94146
Meetings: First or second Thursday of month. Noe Valley Library, 451 Jersey St., 7:30 p.m. This month, June 9, 7 p.m.

Friends of the Noe Valley Farmers' Market; co-sponsor: Noe Valley Ministry
Contact: Paula Benton, 248-1332
Mailing Address: 4104 24th St., #401, San Francisco, CA 94114
Meetings: Even Thursdays (call to confirm). Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez St., 6 p.m.

Friends of On Lok's 30th Street Senior Center
Contact: Marianne Hampton, 601-7845
Mailing Address: 205 30th St., San Francisco, CA 94131
Meetings: Occasional. Call for details.

Liberty Hill Neighborhood Association
Contact: John Barbey, 695-0990
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 192114, San Francisco, CA 94119
Meetings: Quarterly. Call for details.

Noe Strolls "Playgroup on Wheels"
Contact: Martine, noestrolls@aol.com
Monthly Stroll: First Tuesday of the month, 1 p.m. To receive stroll locations and notices of other events, e-mail your first name, and your baby's first name and age, to noestrolls@aol.com, or log on to the group's web site: www.noestrolls.com.

Noe Valley Democratic Club
Contact: Rafael Mandelman, 648-4010
Meetings: Third Wednesday of the month. Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez St., 7:30 p.m.

Noe Valley Merchants and Professionals Association
Contact: Carol Yenne, 648-3954
Mailing Address: c/o Small Frys, 4066 24th St., San Francisco, CA 94114
Meetings: Last Wednesday of the month, Bank of America, 24th and Castro, 9 a.m.

Outer Noe Valley Merchants
Contact: Jim Appenrodt, 641-1500
Mailing Address: 294 29th St., San Francisco, CA 94131
Meetings: Call for details.

See Jane Run Running/Walking Club
Contact: Lori Shannon, 401-8338
Mailing Address: 3870 24th Street, San Francisco, CA 94114
Meetings: Sundays, 10 a.m. (Runners meet at See Jane Run to pick up the route for a 5K run/walk in San Francisco.) For information, go to www.SeeJaneRunSports.com.

Southwest Mission Neighborhood Association (SWMNA)
Boundaries: 24th Street to Cesar Chavez and Fair Oaks to Mission
Contact: Lori Oshiro, Secretary
E-mail: lori@tail-wagging.com
Web site: <http://www.tail-wagging.com/neighborhood-mainpage.htm>
Meetings: No longer regular.
Communication via e-mail and newsletters.

Upper Noe Neighbors
Contact: Vicki Rosen, 285-0473
Mailing Address: 169 Valley St., San Francisco, CA 94131
Meetings: Last Thursday of the month (call to confirm), Upper Noe Rec Center, Day and Sanchez, 7:30 p.m.

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Old Library Photos Wanted

Do you have any pictures that show the original lighting fixtures or other original furnishings and fixtures at the Noe Valley Library?

The architects from Carey and Company, who are working on the upcoming renovation, would like to find out what the original lighting fixtures looked like.

I will make a copy of your photos and return your originals to you. Thank you so much!
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This 'n' That

By Laura McHale Holland

Noe Valley plays a minor role in *Country Joe and Me*, a book written by Noe Valley native Ron Cabral. A retired San Francisco public schoolteacher and principal now living in Concord, Cabral grew up in the neighborhood, initially on 23rd Street, then above his mom Flora's beauty shop, La Florita's House of Beauty on 24th Street. It was located next door to Tuggey's Hardware, where the 24th Street Cheese Company is now.



In the 1950s, Ron Cabral's mom owned a beauty shop called La Florita's, located on 24th Street near Sanchez.

The book chronicles Cabral's 44-year friendship with Country Joe McDonald, of Woodstock fame. McDonald's *I-Feel-Like-I'm-Fixin'-to-Die Rag* became an anthem against the Vietnam War, with its memorable lyrics such as "And it's one, two, three, what are we fighting for?"

Don't ask me, I don't give a damn. Next stop is Vietnam...."

Cabral's story provides a slice of the cultural upheaval that occurred in the 1960s and early '70s. It also recounts McDonald's brief love affair with Janis Joplin (who lived in Noe Valley for a short time), and describes "Summerland," an experiment in alternative education created when McDonald was a volunteer teacher at Opportunity High, where Cabral also worked.

Cabral and McDonald's friendship began in 1960, when they were both fresh out of high school and stationed at Atsugi, Japan, in the Navy. In 1964, after they returned to civilian life, McDonald showed up at Cabral's door and announced, "I've come to Frisco to break into show biz."

Cabral describes McDonald's reaction to Noe Valley's fog in his book: "Joe thought the San Francisco summer fog that draped around Twin Peaks and then just poured down into Noe Valley looked like Martian gas. The sight of the fog rolling down the flanks of Twin Peaks, like it does, is really something to behold. As a kid, I always loved to watch the fog come in. I thought everyone had a fog to watch—I didn't know I was living in a fairyland-like setting, which Noe Valley can be when the climate is just right. There is no place quite like it anywhere."

McDonald and Cabral lost touch for a few years and then reconnected at the "Human Be-In" in Golden Gate Park in January 1967. "It was like the gathering of the tribes—Allen Ginsberg, Timothy Leary, the Grateful Dead, Quicksilver Messenger Service, Jerry Rubin—all these people converging together," Cabral says. "I saw Joe up on stage. His face was all painted up, and his hair was long. I got up close and asked, 'Hey man, what are you doin' up there?' I thought at first that he was in the Grateful Dead. He said he had



Joe McDonald (left) and Ron Cabral, shown here visiting the Vietnam War Memorial in Washington, D.C., have been buddies since their teens.

his own band, Country Joe and the Fish."

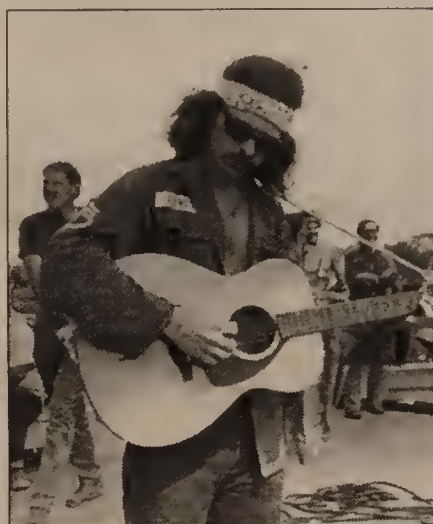
Subsequently Cabral managed three bands, one of which, Gold, opened shows for Janis Joplin, Mike Bloomfield, and Ten Years After at Winterland. (World in Sound, a German record label, has just released Gold's music on two CDs.) In the early '70s, at McDonald's suggestion, Cabral started writing a book about their adventures. Cabral even submitted a manuscript to Jann Wenner, founder of *Rolling Stone* magazine, but Wenner rejected it saying, "Joe's not Bob Dylan, he doesn't have any hit records, you're an

unknown author, and you want us to invest \$5,000 to publish a book?"

The manuscript spent most of the following decades in a drawer. Every so often, Cabral would edit and update it. Then in 1998, McDonald suggested that Cabral print up just a few chapters and try selling them at one of his concerts. (McDonald tours now with most of his original band members under the name the Country Joe Band.) Cabral brought 30 copies, and they sold within five minutes.

"It validated that people really do want to read about Joe, and that inspired me to get the book out. I went with Author House, and it's been a good arrangement, especially now that we have a hardback to place in bookstores. Whatever happens, the book's going to be available for a long time; it's not going to disappear. This print on demand is definitely something worth looking into," he says. Print-on-demand (POD) technology allows publishers to print books as they are ordered, avoiding the financial risk of printing thousands of books in advance.

Atypically, the book was published in paperback in October 2003, and came out in hardcover this April. It is available through www.authorhouse.com and other major online booksellers. It can also be ordered through local bookstores. If



Country Joe McDonald, tuning up to sing his "Fixin'-to-Die" rag at the 1969 Woodstock festival. Photo by Jim Marshall

CONTINUED ON PAGE 39



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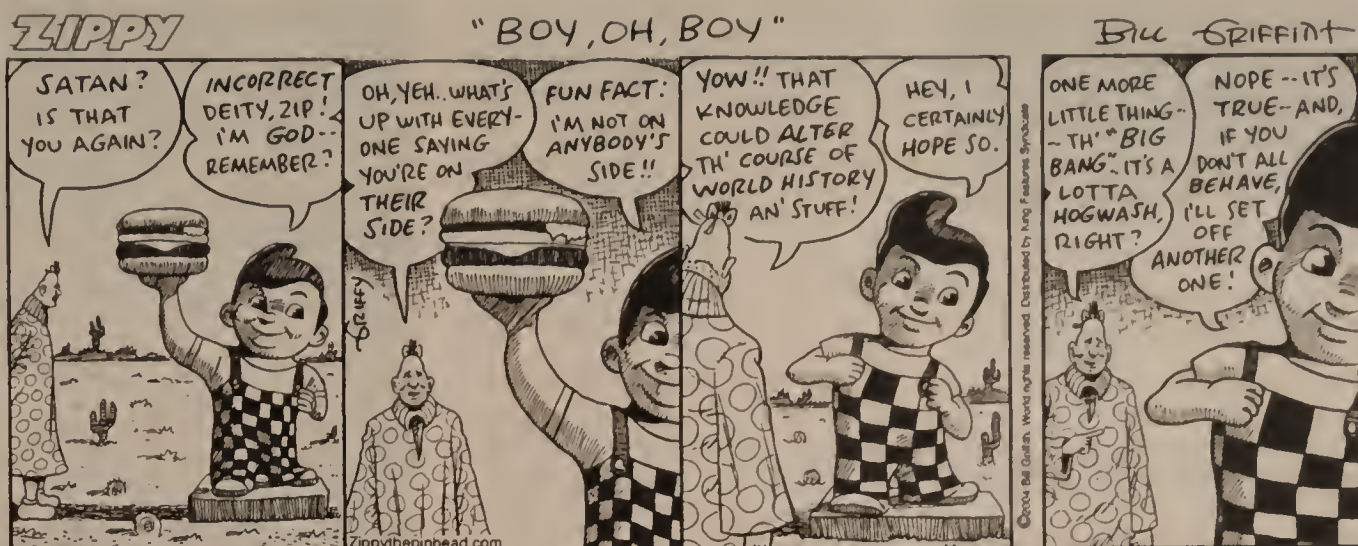


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From deep in the Voice archives we retrieved this seasonally appropriate strip created by former Noe Valley resident Bill Griffith in 1994.



THIS 'N' THAT



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This 'n' That

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 37

you'd rather buy the book at a concert, McDonald's schedule is at www.countryjoe.com.

Longtime 23rd Street resident **Ramon Sender** has also recently made use of POD publishing. His book, *A Death in Zamora*, was published in 1989 by the University of New Mexico Press. It received positive reviews, but subsequently fell out of print. Sender re-released it in May, under the imprint Calm Unity Books. His nom de plume for the book is Ramon Sender Barayon because his father, a noted Spanish novelist in exile for most of his career, was also named Ramon Sender.

A Death in Zamora documents Sender's search for the truth about his mother, Amparo Barayon, who was executed during the Spanish Civil War by Generalissimo Franco's fascist forces. Sender, now 69, was just 4 years old at the time. After the family found refuge in the United States, Sender's father refused to provide any details about his mother and forbade him from asking relatives and family friends about her. With the encouragement of his wife, **Judith Levy-Sender**, he persisted in researching his roots and learned much about his homeland's civil war in the process. The book is in stock at Cover to Cover Booksellers, and is available online at Amazon.com.

Sender is also in the news because he is leaving his post as the administrative director of the Noe Valley Ministry building at the end of July. For the past five years, he's manned the front office and done everything from "repairing a hinge on a door, to printing the Ministry's newsletters, to running to the bank, to making sure the calendars are up to date, to answering phone calls, to helping people who can't speak English very well write their classified ads for the *Voice*," he says. (Thanks, Ramon.) He also plays accordion at birthday parties for seniors who gather for lunch at the Noe Valley



After five years as administrative director of the Noe Valley Ministry, Ramon Sender, along with frequent companion Riqui Rikardo, a Cairn-Westie terrier, will be leaving to pursue his writing and musical endeavors.

Photo by Jack Tipple

Senior Center. His dog **Riqui**, a Cairn-Westie mix, often mans the office with him, and is a big hit with the tykes at the Noe Valley Co-op Nursery School.

Sender says he's leaving the Ministry to free up more time for his music and writing projects. "I've got a series of concerts on the East Coast coming up in October with members of a composers' collaborative I belonged to in the 1960s called the San Francisco Tape Music Center. For four years we gave monthly concerts of new music in San Francisco. In

1966, we moved everything to Mills College, where it still thrives as the Center for Contemporary Music." A devotee of Buddhism and meditation, Sender shares many of his essays and news of his latest creative projects at his web site, www.ray-sender.com.

Filmmaker and 28th Street resident **Michelle Blair** is putting on a different kind of show on Saturday, Aug. 28, at Traveling Jewish Theater, on Florida Street

between 17th and Mariposa. It's a fundraiser for her film in progress, *Carrying On! Jewish Arts, Jewish Identity*. Her first film, *Inside Out: Stories of Bulimia* (2002), won a National Health Information Award as well as a commendation from former California Governor Gray Davis.

"My religion is Judaism, and it can seem like this big antiquated thing that's steeped in alienating rituals and patriarchal ideas—things that might make you feel uncomfortable. Yet you have this feeling for Judaism. What does it mean?" Blair muses. "I can't speak for everybody, but through my research and conversations with friends, it seems that many Jews feel more cultural than religious and are trying to figure out what to do with their feelings. This film explores that with young performing artists who are tackling the same issues, each in a unique and edgy way."

Some of the featured artists are cabaret-style singer **Amy Tobin**, who, through rock songs, reinterprets the lives of Biblical heroines such as Esther; violinist **Daniel Hoffman**, leader of the group Davka, which merges Klezmer/Yiddish music, Middle-Eastern/Sephardic music, Western classical music, and elements of American jazz and pop music; and **Yuri Lane**, a one-man beatbox (think Bobby McFerrin fermented and multiplied) whose acclaimed show, *From Tel Aviv to Ramallah*, is a modern retelling of the story of the brothers Isaac and Ishmael, the Jewish and Arab sons of the patriarch Abraham.

The requested donation for the fundraiser is \$25. The evening will begin with a reception at 7:30 followed by live performances by some of the film's featured artists, the film's eight-minute trailer, and a question-and-answer period. Write to Michelle@insideoutfilms.com for more information, or call 415-695-2909.

Got any personal milestones to share? We're interested in everything from new babies to new ventures. Contact us by e-mailing thisnthat@noevalleyvoice.com. Or if it's more convenient, leave a message at 415-821-3324 or write the *Noe Valley Voice*, 1021 Sanchez Street, San Francisco, CA 94114.

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STORE TREK

By Doug Konecky

Store Trek is a regular *Voice* feature profiling new shops and businesses in Noe Valley. This month we introduce a Yucatecan Mexican restaurant, a gourmet olive oil store, and a shop specializing in handmade crafts, jewelry, and stationery.

MI LINDO YUCATAN

4042 24th Street near Castro Street
415-826-3942

Whereas Mexico City restaurant stood its ground for only three months (see *Voice* Store Trek January 2004), owners Benny Huerta and Jorge Gongora of Mi Lindo Yucatan are determined to reverse the trend of unhappy endings to new restaurants at this address.

One big thing the two have going for them is Chef Maria Pacheco. Pacheco's delicious takes on specialties from Mexico's southeast region have already proven successful at the first Mi Lindo Yucatan on Valencia Street, which has been dishing out *salbutes*, *panuchos*, and *chilindrias* to packed crowds for almost a year.

All that's left of the old Alcatrazes decor are the tables and chairs. The interior has been freshly repainted in bright, primary colors, with paintings of Mayan women making tortillas hanging on the walls right next to glyph-like *muy macho* warriors about to head off to war. An altar-like window treatment scatters black beans under red and blue bowls of pasilla chilies and yellow sunflowers.

Yucatecan cuisine is different from the cooking of north or central Mexico. You'll find more grilled foods, more pickled accompaniments, and more heat in a restaurant in Merida, say, than in Mexico City, Monterrey, or Mexicali.

Pacheco's Yucateco delicacies explode off your tastebuds. Poc-chuc (charbroiled pork marinated in Yucatecan spices, \$8.75); Relleno Negro de Pavo (turkey cooked in a very dark and smoky mole brought from Yucatan and cooked with habanero, pasilla, and jalapeno chilies, \$8.50); and the weekend-only Puchero Yucateco (a kind of soup-stew of chicken, pork, beef, and vegetables, said to be kind to people with hangovers, \$8.75) are dishes not often seen in San Francisco.

An intense antojitos (appetizers) menu is available as well, most of them variants of tortilla wrappings around various fillings. The flautas and Tacos de Cochinita (pork cooked in achiote with pickled red onions) are cheap (\$1.95) and delicious, though many try the Platillo Mi Lindo Yucatan (\$12.75), which is a combination plate bringing to the table two small-size versions of seven different appetizers.

Huerta, who is from Cuernavaca, Mexico, ran Carmen's Taqueria Express for several years, while Gongora, who is from Yucatan, was a chef at Julie's Supper Club. Assuming the Mexico City lease, they opened Mi Lindo Yucatan on 24th Street on an auspicious date: Cinco de Mayo (May 5). "We want to bring our food to local people," Huerta says. "We know they're going to love this cooking."

Mi Lindo Yucatan is open daily from 10 a.m. to 11 p.m.



Celia, Socorro, Jorge, Pilar, and Brenda (left to right) serve up the hot and spicy menu at Mi Lindo Yucatan.

STONEHOUSE CALIFORNIA OLIVE OIL

3901 24th Street at Sanchez Street
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www.stonehouseoliveoil.com

The Bay Area is known for its dominance in all things edible, from Napa Valley premium wineries to Berkeley's Chez Panisse to the Mission's cheap, hearty burritos. For foodies in Noe Valley who feel our neighborhood has been left behind (we do have our farmers' market now), don't despair: there's a new epicurean contender on the corner of Sanchez and 24th streets.

Stonehouse California Olive Oil, an eight-year-old Fairfield company, opened its second San Francisco retail store—the other is in the Ferry Building—on May 1 in Dharma's and Juice-It's old location.

President Trish Baldwin, a Berkeley resident, loves 24th Street and is excited to be in one of her favorite San Francisco shopping spots. "Everybody cooks in San Francisco," Baldwin says. "Noe Valley is a community that fits in exactly with what we're doing." What they're doing is offering top-quality olive oil in bulk. As Assistant Manager Kim O'Neill describes it, "Our goal is to sell good olive oil to people, and to provide them with a service that is ecologically sound."

O'Neill says the company also hopes to fill part of the void left by the Real Food Company last fall. To that end, Stonehouse has started selling Fatted Calf Charcuterie products, which include sausages, pâté, and salami made with Niman Ranch meats and organic spices and seasonings. The shop is also selling imported Italian and French grocery items such as canned tomatoes, anchovy paste, and risotto.

"The idea is to have a product mix so that customers will think of us as an easy gourmet dinner stop," O'Neill explains.

The bright corner store has been furnished sparsely, with dark green walls behind white wooden cabinets stocked with tall bottles of olive oil and imported vinegars. At the rear of the shop is a tasting bar, where O'Neill invites customers to sample chunks of Acme baguettes dipped into small dishes of oil.

Stonehouse's basic Extra-Virgin Olive Oil, which won a silver medal at the Los Angeles County Fair in 2003, has a lusty, grassy flavor. The extra-virgin Sevillano Oil is "more buttery and very suave, with a rich mouth feel," says O'Neill. Other standouts are the Persian Lime, Blood Orange, and Lisbon Lemon olive oils. These are flavored oils made from olives and citrus fruits crushed side by side.

O'Neill says the Dipping Oil is "super popular." It's a blend of the company's garlic olive oil, imported balsamic vinegar, hot pepper flakes, and spices.



Natalia Miner invites you to taste 12 oils and vinegars at Stonehouse California Olive Oil, a gourmet shop at 24th and Sanchez.



The ladybug designs are ubiquitous at Ladybug Ladybug, a new gift emporium on 24th Street next to Martha's Coffee.

Photos by Beverly Tharp

The silver medal blend is \$14 for 750 ml, and the Sevillano costs \$20 for 500 ml. The blended oils retail for \$10 for a 225 ml bottle and \$14 for a 500 ml bottle. Stonehouse will refill customers' empty bottles with any of the oils in the store for \$2 off the retail price. Any bottle will do, even an old wine bottle.

Stonehouse owns its own 100-acre grove outside of Oroville, just below Table Mountain, and farms organically; however, since the company also buys bulk olives from other producers, the oil cannot be labeled organic. A strictly organic estate oil will be added to the inventory soon, Baldwin says.

She also plans to offer housewares such as lemon zesters, peelers, and a Pizza-at-Home Kit. People can come in and buy fresh-made pizza dough, plus all the ingredients to put on top, to make and eat their pizza at home hot from the oven. Baldwin will even sell pizza stones for those who don't have one, she says.

Customers should feel free to stop by and let Baldwin, O'Neill, or any staff member know what sorts of sundry items they'd like to see in the store.

Stonehouse is open Monday through Friday, 11 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Saturdays, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.; and Sundays, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

LADYBUG LADYBUG
3870 24th Street near Vicksburg Street

415-824-5477 (415-824-KISS)
www.ladybugladybug.com

Lisa Rachel Sherratt and Sheila Musgrave are the creators of Ladybug Ladybug, a new handcrafts gift shop that opened in late April in the space vacated by See Jane Run at 24th and Vicksburg. (SJR's athletic apparel shop moved up to Toko Imports' old spot.)

The proprietors, who are longtime friends, named the shop after the well-known nursery rhyme ("Ladybug, ladybug, fly away home").

"It's a good tag line," Sherratt says, adding that she and Musgrave used to work for a greeting card company. "Also, ladybugs are lucky, so it's doubly lucky."

The partners have completely renovated the storefront, starting with a coat

of ladybug-red paint on the exterior. Sherratt is an artist, and her touch is apparent everywhere. The floor has been sprayed a sea-foam blue and is covered with displays filled with colorful gifts.

Sixty percent of the stock is produced by local artisans, including greeting cards, art books, jewelry, baby oils, and a raft of merchandise festooned with—you guessed it—ladybugs. Sherratt can and will customize anything with her popular design—right now the store carries wall hangings, pillows, T-shirts, scarves, sachets, and framed art bearing the lovable little red *arthropoda insecta coccinellidae hippodamia*.

Jewelry prices range from 99 cents to \$200; greeting cards start at \$1.50; bath and body oils sell in the \$18 to \$20 range, and Sherratt's silk paintings bring in anywhere from \$40 to \$300. The store also sells silk slippers, candles, tote bags, stuffed animals, and stationery.

You'll also find *Lisa's Garden*, a series of children's books illustrated by Sherratt and written in Scotland by her mother, Sue Bates ("my not so silent partner"). The books sell for \$3.50 to \$6.95 and have titles such as *The Bold Worm*, *The Independent Ant*, and *The Lazy Bee*. In December 2003, *Lisa's Garden* was named one of the top five products in San Francisco by the city's Small Business Commission.

Ladybug Ladybug's business side is presided over by Musgrave, a Sunset District resident whose background is in customer service (she was also a flight attendant). The shop moved to Noe Valley from its previous location near the Balboa Theater in the Outer Richmond. While successful there, the two co-owners are looking forward to increased foot traffic on 24th Street.

"Our main clientele is probably women ages 20 to 38," notes Sherratt, who lives in the Outer Mission.

She's had her eye on Noe Valley for a couple of years, especially since she hangs out on 24th Street all the time. "I like it a lot here."

Regular hours for Ladybug Ladybug are Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., and Sunday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.





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Illustrated
Reminiscences
by Florence Holub

After the Wedding, the War Begins

Florence Holub wrote this column for the July/August 1990 issue of the Voice, a few weeks after Soviet premier Mikhail Gorbachev and his wife, Raisa, paid a visit to San Francisco.

Last month, when the Gorbachevs visited our city, Raisa departed from her scheduled tour to visit a small mom and pop grocery store, the New Terrace Market, at the corner of 17th Street and Uranus, in the Upper Market area. This visit prompted a flood of memories, for my husband Leo and I had often shopped at that store after our marriage on July 3, 1941.

We lived, with our big yellow cat Manfred, just around the corner in a small "fixer-upper" cottage to the rear of a large, peak-roofed house on Mars Street. We paid \$17 a month rent, and when a neighbor heard this, he informed us we "were robbed," because the last tenants had paid only \$15. But it was a charming, ivy-covered hideaway, with many sun-flooded windows that provided a pleasant view of the green and flowering rear gardens on both sides.



This idyllic spot, however, did have one distressing feature. To get to our house, we had to walk up a narrow corridor between the big house in front of us and the wall of the neighboring building. This was easy enough until we reached the window of our landlady's kitchen, at which point all hell broke loose. Our landlady's two dogs, who had been lying quietly on the floor until they detected our footsteps, would leap at the window, barking ferociously, frothing and snapping and displaying jaws full of sharp white teeth as they scratched the pane of glass that separated us from them—their claws only inches from our faces.

Our landlady would lightly tap them with a folded newspaper, probably just to placate us, not to discipline them, for she was an elderly widow who lived alone, and these were her protective guardians. Nevertheless, the experience was always completely unnerving and would set our hearts pounding.

The landlady also had a number of cats, one of whom was a frequent uninvited guest in our home. We never knew

when we might encounter her, crouched in a corner of the house, appraising us with distrust and possible malice. One night, I awakened to see a long stealthy feline form, barely visible in the dark, slowly creeping toward the face of my sleeping husband. Instinctively, I swung my arm in an arc that sent the animal flying off the bed into the blackness.

On went the lights, Leo jumped up, and we scurried around searching for the prowler, who was nowhere to be found. Finally, we looked under the bed and discovered our own cat, Manfred, wide-eyed and shaking, but fortunately unharmed by the blow. He didn't hold a grudge, thank goodness, and was soon bringing us an assortment of mice and salamanders as peace offerings.



In the fall, long before Thanksgiving, we began to shop for a Christmas present for Leo's best friend, Bob Hanson, who was an Air Force lighter pilot stationed in the Philippines. After days of scanning gift items on display, we chose a soft beige virgin wool sweater, and mailed it early enough for him to receive it by Christmas.

Before we could get to the rest of our holiday shopping, however, something happened that neither of us will ever forget. On Sunday, Dec. 7, 1941, we awakened late, as was our custom, got dressed, and leisurely strolled around the corner to buy the Sunday newspaper at the Terrace Market. There we found the grocer and his wife tearfully telling the customers the shocking news: Pearl Harbor had been bombed in a devastating attack by Japanese bombers. At home on the radio, President Franklin D. Roosevelt angrily and eloquently spoke to the nation. We were at war.

Every block in the city began to learn to live with the possibility of an air attack, under the guidance of a "block warden," who visited each home giving directions and information. During one visit to our house, the warden encouraged us to try to solve the "blackout" problem posed by our many windows. As he departed, he divulged that he had been holding us up as an example to the rest of the wards, saying, "That young couple [us] already has a bucket of sand on their back porch to put out any fires that might be started by incendiary

bombs dropped by enemy planes."

We accepted the praise in modest silence, but we were actually feeling guilty: the real reason we had that sand (in a pre-kitty litter era) was to change Manfred's sandbox. As for the blackout problem—we decided to just

turn out the lights and go to bed whenever the air raid sirens sounded.

In World War II, all of the fine young men went off to war or into the defense

industries. My younger brother Warde was somewhere out in the South Pacific, a gunner's mate aboard the destroyer USS *Cassin*. My older brother Mike sailed to and from the war zone as a sergeant major aboard the troop transport SS *Sea Star*.

One day, while unloading troops at Saipan, Mike spotted the *Cassin*, also in port. He pulled a few strings and was given a lift in the port director's gig (a ship's small boat), and sped over to see Warde. The commander of the *Cassin*, thinking an admiral was approaching, had him "piped" (a formal military salute), only to find that the "brass" they had welcomed was just a G.I. Joe. But my two brothers got to hug one another and clasp hands, just before the *Cassin* went out to sea again.

Leo's brother Richard, an Air Corps test pilot, was sent to England, where he distinguished himself and was decorated by General Carl Spatz, commander of the Allied air forces. Leo worked at the Hunters Point Naval Dry Dock, where, as a shiprigger, he moved heavy equipment—pulling propellers and shafts, and installing gun mounts.

Many months after we sent it, the package containing the beige sweater was returned, and we learned that Leo would never see his friend again. Bob had been killed on the seventh day of the war, and for his heroism he was decorated posthumously. But many young men did come home, to a grateful nation gearing down for peace.



Since the end of the war, the years have passed so rapidly that it is hard to fathom the incredible shift that has taken place in world affairs. Now in 1990, presidents Gorbachev and Bush are conferring about economic exchanges and reductions in nuclear weapons, and East and West Germany are embarking upon reunification. Even more remarkable to me is the fact that, as this issue of the *Voice* is being distributed, Leo and I will be celebrating our 49th wedding anniversary!

I can tell you now how our anniversary celebration will go. Leo will take me to one of Noe Valley's finest restaurants, and as the evening draws to a close, he'll say these words: "Want to try for another year?"

I will hesitate a bit, lest he think me easy, then casually reply, "Okay." If all goes well, in exactly one year, we will be celebrating our 50th anniversary.

Things did go very well, and 13 years later, Florence and Leo Holub will celebrate their 63rd anniversary this July 3 at Bacco's on Diamond Street. Let's all cross our fingers that Leo pops the question and Florence signs up for another year. Happy anniversary!

"Sue saved our sanity!"



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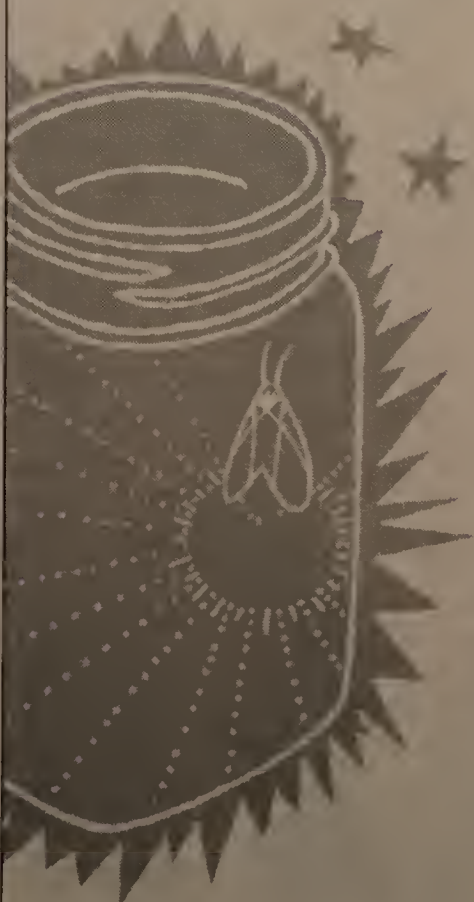
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Kiss Me. Sixteen-month-old Eva Bender greets a canine friend on 24th Street.

Photo by Pamela Gerard



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Space is still available in many Fall Semester 2004 credit classes starting Wednesday, August 18th at City College's of San Francisco **Castro/Valencia Campus**. Listed below is just a sampling of evening classes offered at 1220 Noe Street and 1800 Market Street. Web registration for new students begins July 14th. Telephone registration for new students starts July 26th. **APPLY NOW!**



SAMPLING OF FALL 2004 CREDIT COURSES

CRN #	Course Title	Days/Times	Location/Room #
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70071	French 1	MW 6:30-9:30 P.M.	1220 Noe 312
70072	French 1A	T 6:30-9:30 P.M.	1220 Noe 9
74704	French 3B	T 6:30-9:30 P.M.	1220 Noe 306
76549	French 5	Th 6:30-9:30 P.M.	1220 Noe 301
76330	Fundamentals of PR	M 6:30-9:45 P.M.	1220 Noe 304
74708	German 10C	Th 6:30-9:30 P.M.	1220 Noe 205
76365	German 10D	Th 6:30-9:30 P.M.	1220 Noe 205
76364	German 2A	T 6:30-9:30 P.M.	1220 Noe 205
74666	Improvisation for Actors	T 6:30-9:30 P.M.	1220 Noe Aud
76371	Italian 10D	W 6:30-9:30 P.M.	1220 Noe 212
76369	Italian 3B	T 6:30-9:30 P.M.	1220 Noe 310
75250	Lesbian Relationships	Th 6:30-9:30 P.M.	1800 Market 304
72816	Mixed Media on Paper	TTh 6:30-9:30 P.M.	1220 Noe 18
74856	Poetry for the People	W 6:30-9:30 P.M.	1220 Noe 306
76373	Russian 10C	W 6:30-9:30 P.M.	1220 Noe 203
75280	Russian 1A	M 6:30-9:45 P.M.	1220 Noe 305
72672	Russian 1A	Th 6:30-9:30 P.M.	1220 Noe 312
70105	Russian 1B	T 6:30-9:30 P.M.	1220 Noe 312
76372	Russian 3A	W 6:30-9:30 P.M.	1220 Noe 203
70108	Sex & Gender in US	W 6:30-9:30 P.M.	1220 Noe 110

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FAMILY ADVENTURES

ARE WE THERE YET?

CLOSE TO HOME

It's a Jungle in There

An Afternoon Idyll at the Conservatory of Flowers

By Rosie Ruley Atkins

"What are you, nuts?" my husband asks when he learns that I'm taking our son, Miles, 8, and his buddy Sam, 7, to the Conservatory of Flowers in Golden Gate Park. He warns me about overturned plants, broken glass, bored boys, and maybe worse.

"They'll love it," I reply. I conjure up an image of Victorian peacefulness; an afternoon spent calmly appreciating the wonders of nature.

On this weekday afternoon, parking is easy to find near the tennis courts across JFK Drive from the Conservatory, which glows in the sunshine, elegant and white on the slope above the elaborately planted flower beds. Originally erected in Golden Gate Park in 1878, the ornate Victorian greenhouse was so damaged by a 1995 windstorm that it was closed for what turned out to be eight years. After a painstaking renovation, it was reopened to the public in September 2003.

The boys tear across the lawn, drawn toward the garden's sprinklers as if the spitting water were a magnet.

"Don't get wet," I call as the boys dance through the spray.

"We're just misty," Miles calls back.

"Mist is good for plants," Sam adds.

We step into the warm entryway of the museum and study the ecological timeline on display there for about a half a second before the boys zip through the swinging doors and head straight to the Aquatic Plants room, where Sam, who has visited the Conservatory before, promises that we'll see a lily pad strong enough to hold a full-grown human. Not wanting to leave such a temptation to chance, I scurry after the boys at a decidedly un-Victorian pace.



There's nothing like the Conservatory's exterior; a frosted-glass fairy palace.

The room is warm and humid, like the tropics. We squeeze past a gaggle of tourists and crouch at the clear wall of the shallow pool so we can examine the strong underside of the *Victoria amazonica*, or giant water lily, whose veins are indeed thick enough to support its six-foot diameter, but I'm not so sure about a

full- or even half-grown human. I notice that Miles is inching toward the edge of the pool, eager to test the lily pad's strength.

"Don't even think about it," I warn.

"I wasn't," he says.

I draw the boys' attention to a beetle, trapped in the pink sac of a carnivorous *Nepenthes* plant, where it will be dissolved by the plant's digestive juices.

"It's like our Venus flytrap at school," Sam says.

"But better," Miles says. "Look at the size of the bug it eats."

Ann Ziolkowski, the operations manager, explains that the beetles make their own way into the Conservatory, where they meet their gruesome fate. "It wasn't planned that way," she says. "It was just good luck." Unless you're a beetle.

In the Highlands Tropics room, we stop to look at the Dracula plant, so named because of its ghoulish appearance when viewed from certain angles.

"I can't see it," Miles complains, sticking his face inches from the plant. "I still can't see it. I still can't...yikes!"

He recoils as a bloodthirsty visage reveals itself to him. He's in such a hurry to get away that he misses the room's mist shower, which feels like a high-end spa treatment. I turn my face toward the nozzles and picture my pores smooth, the crow's feet around my eyes undetectable.

In the main reception room, the boys examine the display case of botanists' instruments. The tools from the mid-19th century, which was the golden age of botanical exploration, include a hand-tooled brass compass, elegant blown-glass jars housing fragile specimens, dazzlingly colorful pinned butterflies, and pages of elegantly scripted notes and letters. Juxtaposed next to the laptop, satellite phone, Federal Express box, and Palm Pilot that represent today's scientific must-haves, the antiques recall the days of magnifying glasses, veiled pith helmets, and the global sensation that the discovery of new plant species created.

"That laptop is the only valuable thing in this whole place," Sam says, puncturing my Victorian fantasy world.

"What about the plants?" I ask him.

"Maybe if there were plant crooks," Sam says. "But what are you going to do with a plant after you steal it?"

The boys flop onto a flat rock and contemplate the towering, century-old *Philodendron speciosum* that winds through the display of "economic plants" that produce cinnamon, pineapple, and vanilla. Colorful squares of light from stained-glass panels play across the boys' arms and faces as they point their fingers in the air, attempting to trace the tangled path of the philodendron's vines as they rise up to the domed ceiling.

We make our way to the Potted Plants room, where the boys sit, whispering and giggling, on a green marble bench set inside a pergola that's hung with orchids. I wander the room, examining the seemingly limitless permutations of orchids on display. Some are so garishly colored that they look plastic. Others are sublime and nearly translucent. Except for the occasional giggling from the pergola, the half-dozen or so visitors in the room are hushed, amazed by the variety that a single species can display.

"They're like people," an older woman whispers to her companion. "Always surprising, sometimes ugly."

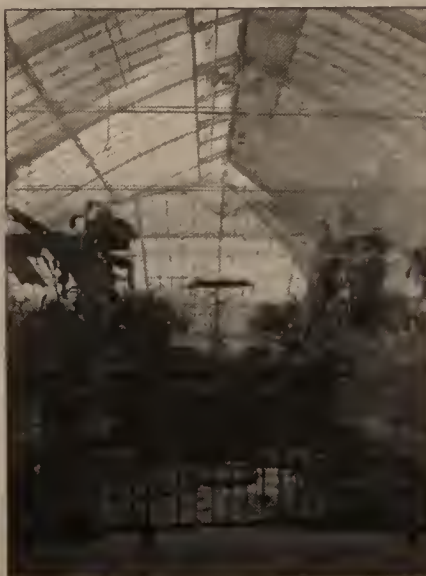
I notice the boys creeping on hands and knees across the slate floor of the room. Their destination appears to be an over-size urn planted with a lush display of ferns and orchids. I read in my guidebook that the urn is from San Francisco's 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition. But it's not history luring the boys—it's the frieze of naked cherubs dancing along the planter's border.

Miles extends a finger, attempting to flick away the fig leaf that is the lone nod



The expansive lawn areas in front of the Conservatory of Flowers provide plenty of room for kids to roam.

Photos by Jack Tipple



Pools with lily pads as big as umbrellas and other plants with fantastic shapes make for an exotic adventure.

to modesty on the figure. Sam's hand is clamped over his mouth, but it doesn't help. Even though the fig leaf remains firmly in place, both boys dissolve into fits of laughter.

I decide to take a Victorian approach to preventing the boys from touching the urn again.

"You know about the legend of the urn, don't you?" I ask them, lowering my voice to a whisper for effect. "Those little boys were alive once, but this greenhouse is under an evil spell. After they touched the enchanted plant, they were frozen in time and transported to the urn."

They boys' eyes grow wide as they inch away from the cherubs.

"They can only escape when the moon is full," I continue, pleased with my dark tale. "Then they dance among the orchids until one of them inevitably touches a plant and they're trapped again."

"Mooooommm," Miles says. "That's not true."

"It could be," I say.

Sam, who apparently is training to be a detective when he grows up, says, "But they're all exactly alike. Were they, like, double triplets or something?"

"Maybe that's part of the spell," I say.

"She's making it up," Miles whispers to Sam. "She's always doing stuff like that."

Nevertheless, my story spooks them sufficiently that we're soon outside in the cool afternoon sunshine, where the boys roll around on the lawn in front of the Conservatory.

"You know what else is really great about the Conservatory of Flowers?" Sam says. "It's close to the playground with the giant purple climbing structure."

With that, we leave Victoriana behind for a few hours of 21st-century fun in the park's Children's Playground.

WENDING YOUR WAY TO THE MUSEUM

The newly restored Conservatory of Flowers, located on the eastern end of Golden Gate Park, is open Tuesday through Sunday, 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Admission is \$5 for adults; \$3 for seniors, students, and youths 12 to 17; \$1.50 for kids 5 to 11; and free for children under 5. On the first Tuesday of the month, it's free for everybody.

Weekdays are the best time to visit with kids, so you have lots of room to move around. (My friend Cindy took her two boys to the Conservatory on a crowded weekend day, and her experience was more gothic horror than Victorian fantasy.) Another mom advises that younger kids may have more fun playing around outside than keeping their hands to themselves inside the museum—an impossible task for the under-5 set.

The Conservatory offers docent-led tours and cool group activities such as scavenger hunts geared toward youth groups. Check the web site for details and reservations: www.conservatory-offlowers.org. Or call 415-666-7001.

If you're riding Muni from Noe Valley, take the 24-Divisadero bus to the 5-Fulton, which stops at the Arguello Gate, just behind the Conservatory of Flowers.

—Rosie Ruley Atkins

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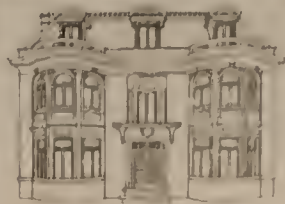
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Hello from Noe Valley. Two-year-old Andrew Sitrin and his pal Uncle Al from North Carolina pause during their tour of 24th Street in June.

Photo by Pomelo Gerord

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Hundreds of Fans weathered the fog on June 19 to catch popular satirist David Sedaris reading and signing his new bestseller, *Dress Your Family in Corduroy and Denim*, at Cover to Cover Booksellers on Castro. Bookstore co-owner Tracy Wynne reports that the book-signing went "really, really well," even with the crush of the crowd. "He was really nice to people, he asked everybody questions about themselves. He was so friendly that even though they had to wait in line a long time, everybody left with a smile on their face."

Photos by Pamela Gerard



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BOOKS in our BRANCH

This month's book list, chosen by Noe Valley librarians Carol Small and Wayne Donica, features a robotic update of the Pygmalion story, an IRS agent's tell-all memoir, and poetic job descriptions from ancient Egypt. To find out which selections are available, call 695-5095, log onto www.sfpl.org, or visit the Noe Valley-Sally Brunn Library at 451 Jersey Street near Castro Street. Besides books, the Noe Valley Library offers magazines, newspapers, DVDs, music CDs, Internet access, and the archives and index to the *Noe Valley Voice*. Branch hours are Tuesdays, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Wednesdays, 1 to 9 p.m.; Thursdays, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Fridays, 1 to 6 p.m.; and Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Adult Fiction

◆ *I Sailed with Magellan* is Stuart Dybek's collection of 11 interwoven stories narrated by a young Polish-American growing up on Chicago's South Side in the 1950s and '60s.

◆ Drawn from his real life, Andrew Huebner's *We Pierce* describes two brothers, one an army sergeant fighting in the Iraqi war, the other a substance-abusing Manhattan writer.

◆ Twice-divorced animatronics technician Ellery Pierce can't find a woman devoid of opinion and sarcasm, so he builds one himself, in *Adventures of the Artificial Woman*, a novel by Thomas Berger.

◆ A thoughtful, dreamy child in a small southern town escapes her stepfather's coldness and her mother's distance through the warmth and understanding of the family cook, in Augusta Trobaugh's *River Jordan*.

Adult Nonfiction

◆ Former arch-conservative journalist David Brock analyzes the powerful forces that control the national media, in *The Republican Noise Machine: Right-Wing Media and How It Corrupts Democracy*.

◆ Simon Head takes a serious look at how advances in information technology have led to the dehumanization of the American workforce, in *The New Ruthless Economy: Work and Power in the Digital Age*.

◆ *Operatives, Spies, and Saboteurs: The Unknown Story of the Men and Women of World War II's OSS*, by Patrick O'Donnell, spells out the critical role of American espionage in World War II.

◆ In a memoir, *Confessions of a Tax Collector: One Man's Tour of Duty Inside the IRS*, Richard Yancey recalls a 12-year career as a revenue officer hunting down tax evaders.

Children's Fiction

◆ If you have a young child and want lovely nursery rhymes to share with him or her, *Pio Peep! Traditional Spanish Nursery Rhymes* is a bilingual collection that will provide many choices: English adaptations by Alice Schertle; illustrations by Vivi Escriva. *Ages 1 to 3.*

◆ In *Ella Sarah Gets Dressed*, by Margaret Chodos-Irvine, a toddler gets opposition on what to wear from every member of her family, but looks fine to her friends at the end of the story. *Ages 2 to 4.*

◆ Using brief text and gorgeous painted tissue-paper collages, Eric Carle provides

information on paternal nursing and camouflage in the fish world, in his latest book, *Mister Seahorse*. *Ages 2 to 5.*

◆ Penguins, bees, bats, and prairie dogs are some of the animals who tell how they experience the world in Diane Ackerman's book of poems *Animal Sense*. *Ages 7 to 11.*

◆ In Janet Anderson's *The Last Treasure*, 13-year-old Ellsworth Smith journeys to Smith Mills and succeeds in unlocking monetary treasure and some important family relationships. *Ages 10 and up.*

Children's Nonfiction

◆ In *My Brother Martin: A Sister Remembers Growing Up with the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.*, author Christine King Farris recalls key moments in the childhood of a person who would become a world-famous leader. Illustrated by Chris Soentpiet. *Ages 6 to 9.*

◆ The Arabian, Tennessee Walking Horse, Shetland Pony, and many lesser-known equines are described in *Horse and Pony Breeds*, by Sandy Ransford, with photographs by Bob Langrish. *Ages 6 to 10.*

◆ In *Voices of Ancient Egypt*, author Kay Winters gives short, poetic descriptions of several of the occupations engaged in by Egyptians—and shows that they took pride in their work. *Ages 7 to 10.*



LIBRARY EVENTS

Puppets and Stories

◆ Jennifer Levine performs a *puppet show*, "Dragons Never Laugh," on Thursday, July 8, and Doris Feyling tells *children's stories* on Tuesday, July 13. Both programs are for ages 2 to 5, and are scheduled for 10 and 11 a.m. Space is limited, so please call 695-5095 for reservations.

Stories and Films for Children

◆ Kids 2 to 5 are invited to attend *preschool story time* at 10 a.m. on Tuesdays, July 6 and 27, and on Aug. 3, 10, 17, and 31. Children 3 to 5 can come watch short *films* at 10 and 11 a.m. on Tuesdays, July 20 and Aug. 24.

Saturday Lapsits

◆ Share stories, songs, and fingerplays with your baby or toddler at the library's *lapsits* at 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, July 3, 10, and 17, and Aug. 21 and 28.

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Advocates for Upper Noe Rec Center
Contact: Greg Clark, 826-6222
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 31869, San Francisco, CA 94131-0869
Meetings: First Tuesday of the month, in the auditorium at Upper Noe Rec Center, Day and Sanchez, 7 p.m.

Castro Area Planning + Action
Contact: Linton Stables, 541-0344, ext. 230; capa@home4us.org
Meetings: Second Thursday of the month, Eureka Valley Recreation Center, 100 Collingwood St., 7:30 p.m.

Diamond Heights Community Association
Contact: Betsy Eddy, 239-5776
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 31529, San Francisco, CA 94131
Meetings: First Thursday of the month, 7:30 p.m. Call for location.

Dolores Heights Improvement Club
Contact: Amy Powell, 647-4228
Mailing Address: 3732 21st St., San Francisco, CA 94114
Meetings: Bimonthly board meetings; membership meetings semi-annually. Call for details.

Duncan Newburg Association (DNA)
Contact: Keith Eickman, 282-8988; Evelyn Martin, 826-6734; Deanna Mooney, 821-4045
Mailing Address: 560 Duncan St., San Francisco, CA 94131
Meetings: Held periodically. Call for details.

East & West of Castro Street Improvement Club
Contact: Paul Kantus, 647-3753
Mailing Address: 492 Douglass St., San Francisco, CA 94114
Meetings: First Wednesday of the month (every other month—call to confirm), Noe Valley Library, 451 Jersey St., 7:30 p.m.

Eureka Valley Promotion Association
Contact: Lion Barnett, 255-3624
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 14137, San Francisco, CA 94114
Meetings: Third Thursday of every month (except December), Eureka Valley Recreation Center, 100 Collingwood St., 7:30 p.m.



Fair Oaks Neighbors
Contact: Pam Coxson, 648-4977
Mailing Address: 25 Fair Oaks St., San Francisco, CA 94110
Meetings: Call for details. The annual Fair Oaks Street Fair is always held the day before Mother's Day.

Friends of Glen Canyon Park
Contact: Richard Craib, 648-0862
Mailing Address: 140 Turquoise Way, San Francisco, CA 94131
Meetings: Call for details.

Friends of Noe Valley
Contact: Debra Niemann, 282-9918
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 460953, San Francisco, CA 94146
Meetings: First or second Thursday of month, Noe Valley Library, 451 Jersey St., 7 p.m. Call to confirm.

Friends of the Noe Valley Farmers' Market; co-sponsor: Noe Valley Ministry
Contact: Paula Benton, 248-1332
Mailing Address: 4104 24th St., #401, San Francisco, CA 94114
Meetings: Even Thursdays (call to confirm), Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez St., 6 p.m.

Friends of On Lok's 30th Street Senior Center
Contact: Marianne Hampton, 601-7845
Mailing Address: 205 30th St., San Francisco, CA 94131
Meetings: Occasional. Call for details.

Liberty Hill Neighborhood Association
Contact: John Barbey, 695-0990
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 192114, San Francisco, CA 94119
Meetings: Quarterly. Call for details.

Noe Strolls "Playgroup on Wheels"
Contact: Martine, noestrolls@aol.com.
Monthly Stroll: First Tuesday of the month, 1 p.m. To receive stroll locations and notices of other events, e-mail your first name, and your baby's first name and age, to noestrolls@aol.com, or log on to the group's web site: www.noestrolls.com.

Noe Valley Democratic Club
Contact: Rafael Mandelman, 648-4010
Meetings: Third Wednesday of the month, Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez St., 7:30 p.m.

Noe Valley Merchants and Professionals Association
Contact: Carol Yenne, 648-3954
Mailing Address: c/o Small Frys, 4066 24th St., San Francisco, CA 94114
Meetings: Last Wednesday of the month, Bank of America, 24th and Castro, 9 a.m.

Outer Noe Valley Merchants
Contact: Jim Appenrodt, 641-1500
Mailing Address: 294 29th St., San Francisco, CA 94131
Meetings: Call for details.

See Jane Run Running/Walking Club
Contact: Lori Shannon, 401-8338
Mailing Address: 3870 24th Street, San Francisco, CA 94114
Meetings: Sundays, 10 a.m. (Runners meet at See Jane Run to pick up the route for a 5K run/walk in San Francisco.) For information, go to www.SeeJaneRunSports.com.

Southwest Mission Neighborhood Association (SWMNA)
Boundaries: 24th Street to Cesar Chavez and Fair Oaks to Mission
Contact: Lori Oshiro, Secretary
E-mail: lori@tail-wagging.com
Web site: <http://www.tail-wagging.com/neighborhood-mainpage.htm>
Meetings: No longer regular. Communication via e-mail and newsletters.

Upper Noe Neighbors
Contact: Vicki Rosen, 285-0473
Mailing Address: 169 Valley St., San Francisco, CA 94131
Meetings: Last Thursday of the month (call to confirm), Upper Noe Rec Center, Day and Sanchez, 7:30 p.m.

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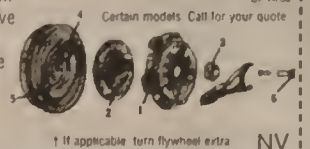
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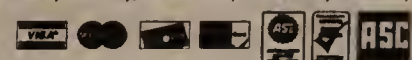
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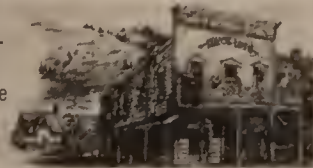
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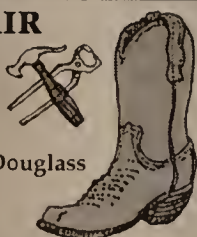
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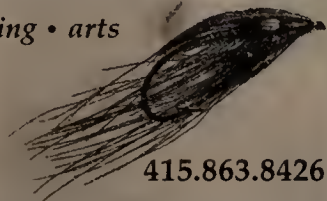


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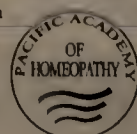
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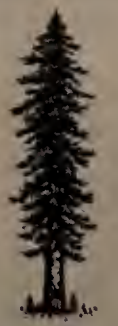
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Travel Advisory: Voice Readers Out of Here

The sights of Cuba, Egypt, Costa Rica, Nepal, Argentina, and Washington, D.C., are featured in this issue's Readers column, where loyal *Noe Valley Voice* readers pack their favorite periodical for a show-and-tell during their travels.

If you would like to join the tour group and make the papers, please mail your photo prints to the *Noe Valley Voice*, 1021 Sanchez Street, San Francisco, CA 94114. Returns will be made only if you include an SASE. Or you can e-mail photos to jack@noevalleyvoice.com. Thanks. We'll see you in September.



Lynn Ferrin leans on a Detroit classic in Trinidad, Cuba, during her January stay. She visited just before the Bush administration ordered travel by Americans to the island nation stopped.



Michael Godfrey (left) and Charles Purdy traded the scenery outside their 24th Street residence for that of Costa Rica and the Arenal volcano in March.



Bob Mendel and Carla Ruff take a break in Nepal while the 26,500-foot Annapurna mountain provides a backdrop. They claim to have found their copy of the *Voice* at a newsstand in nearby Gadipani village.



Catherine and Horace Marks escorted their son Jeremy to the Junior National Young Leaders conference in Washington, D.C., this March. Jeremy is a student at St. Paul's School in Noe Valley.



In January, the Leapers of Collingwood Street ventured to the southernmost city in the world: Ushuaia, Argentina. Rae Leaper reports that the *Voice* made good reading while they made their way across Drake's Passage.



Anita Villarreal paused in front of the Maidum pyramid and searched for moisturizer ads during her March trip to Egypt.

Position Available: Administrative Director, Noe Valley Ministry, a progressive Presbyterian Church and center for community. This position focuses on support for church staff, fostering of church vision, and creation of a welcoming climate. Responsibilities include office work and coordination/oversight of building calendar and user activities. We seek an outgoing, organized person with a strong sense of self, the ability to relate well to a variety of people, attention to detail, good communication skills, and computer literacy (Microsoft Word, Pagemaker, Filemaker, Excel, Quicken). Familiarity with church life and nonprofits is helpful. Experience with building maintenance also a plus. Send letters of inquiry and resumes to Noe Valley Ministry, Attn: Rev. Keenan Kelsey, 1021 Sanchez Street, San Francisco, CA 94114.

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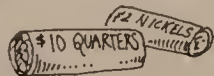
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Then mail your ad copy and check, made out to the *Noe Valley Voice*, so that we receive it by the **15th of the month before** the month in which you'd like to advertise. The address is *Noe Valley Voice* Class Ads, 1021 Sanchez Street, San Francisco, CA 94114. (Sorry, the *Voice* is unable to accept Class Ads by phone or e-mail at this time.)

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The next *Voice* will be the September 2004 issue, distributed in Noe Valley on or before September 1. **The deadline for Class Ads is Aug. 15.** The Class Ads will be printed in the newspaper and then displayed on our web site (www.noevalleyvoice.com) for one month.

Class advertisers should keep in mind that only the first few words of the ad (not to exceed one line of type) will be set in bold. Also, receipts and tear sheets will be provided only if your order is accompanied by an SASE. Thank you.

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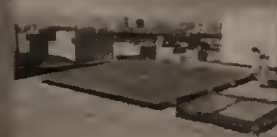
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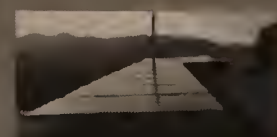
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and now for the RUMORS behind the news

The Women Are Strong,
The Men Are Good-Looking,
And the Pizza Has Parking

By Mazook

FOUR SCORE people showed up for the joint Friends of Noe Valley/Noe Valley Merchants Association meeting on June 9 at the Noe Valley Library. It was standing-room-only in the community room; listening-room-only in the hallway.

Since *Voice* reporter Liz Highleyman attended, I got to go as a "concerned neighbor," which I surely am. It was great to see Planning chief Larry Badiner, District 8 Supervisor Bevan Dufty, and Joe Caruso, director of Mayor Newsom's Office of Neighborhood Services.

Badiner explained our Downtown Noe Valley zoning restrictions, which let loose a flood of questions from the audience. After that, everyone was given two to three minutes to speak his mind. I was impressed by how many merchants and neighbors spoke up. Many expressed fears over the potential loss of vitality on our commercial strip. Some said maybe we need to tweak the zoning restrictions and allow more restaurants. Others warned that we shouldn't tinker with the zoning formula that has served our quaint little urban village for the past 20 years. I used up my three minutes early on in the proceedings and stole an additional 90 seconds near the end. People were talking up such a storm, they had to send someone to the store for "more water."

It was fun, informative, and thought-provoking. It was live theater, far better than anything on TV or for rent at the video store. Let's do it again.

(*News Flash!* Friends President Debra Niemann reports that 15 Noe Valley residents who attended the meeting have volunteered for a new 24th Street Revitalization Committee. The group met to map out goals on June 16 and scheduled a follow-up meeting for Aug. 16, 7 p.m. If you'd like to get involved, contact Niemann at nemo@rcn.com or 282-9918.)

☎ ☎ ☎

TA-DA! The chains finally fell from the entrance to our brand-new \$4 million parking lot on 24th Street. By the third week of June, the kiosk had a live person in it and drivers were paying money to park their vehicles. Wow!

"We just started putting attendants on duty on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday afternoons and evenings, so we can get an idea of what the usage will be," says Luke Aguilera of American Parking Management, the North Beach-based business hired by the Noe Valley Ministry and its anonymous benefactors, who bought the property around three years ago. "We are officially starting on July 1."

Aguilera says the lot will charge a flat rate of \$5 for all day or all evening, with evening rates on weekends going up to \$7. However, Aguilera adds, "during the day, we are allowing parking for the first 15 minutes for 50 cents. After that, it will jump to the flat \$5 rate." This is to accommodate the mobile java junkies who might want to zip into Martha's across the street. You can purchase your tickets at the automated system outside the kiosk.

Aguilera stresses that these rates are just "introductory," until they figure out what the demand will be. Noe Valley Ministry parishioners can park free on Sundays, and the now organically growing Noe Valley Farmers' Market will be

parked in the lot every Saturday morning on a permanent basis.

☎ ☎ ☎

THE WELLS FARGO STAGE COACH will be dropping off a teller and two bank officers at the 24th Street mini-branch at the end of July, according to bank manager Bruce Belknap.

"We will be offering full-service banking to the neighborhood so that people can come in and open new accounts, make deposits, cash checks, make credit card payments, and conduct other business with the bank," Belknap says.

As all you Wells bankers know, our Downtown Noe Valley branch has been an ATM-only stop since it opened about 10 years ago. Belknap, who has managed the branch for the last year, says he's very happy that it's going full-service. "People have been asking for teller service, and this makes it much more convenient for all of our customers. It will really enhance the level of our banking services."

☎ ☎ ☎

THERE'S NO BIZ LIKE SHOE BIZ, which has opened up its sixth San Francisco store right here in Noe Valley. Shoe Biz has four stores on Haight Street and a fifth store on Valencia near 19th. June 19 was the grand opening of the 24th Street store, in the former location of Cover to Cover, near Church Street.

"It has been truly amazing," says Shoe Biz general manager Julie Hardt. "From the time we opened the doors, people have been coming in and telling us, 'We are so glad you are here!' And I can tell you, we are so glad to be here—this is a great neighborhood!"

Shoe Biz is stocking the store with more than 30 brands of women's, men's, and children's shoes, from \$9 Chinese slippers to \$500 dress boots. "People are telling us that they are so happy to have a wide selection to choose from. Our

sneaker section has been very popular," says Hardt. "The people we have working in the store also seem to be quite happy, because they're residents of the neighborhood who all get to walk to work, which is real nice."

Owners Mehran and Nooshin Esmati started the Biz 25 years ago in the Haight, but they have expanded rapidly in the past two years. They bought their space and have totally remodeled the interior of the store, so they promise to keep Noe Valley well shod for a long time.

☎ ☎ ☎

ALMOST READY TO WEAR: Another walk-to-worker will be Noe Valleeon Teresa Gay, who is throwing the grand opening party for her new women's clothing store, La Coterie Style Studio, on July 16, from 6 to 8 p.m. The boutique is located at the former site of Lit'l Lizards, right across from Bell Market.

Gay says she has been in preparation for this day for over a year now. She decided to leave the corporate world behind—she was a marketing consultant for name-brand apparel manufacturers—and open a store "selling great women's clothes in my own neighborhood, which I love, and I get to walk to work."

Gay has lived on 26th Street for the past six years and can trot to the store in about five minutes. "I've been looking for the right store in Noe Valley since January and was quite lucky to get this space," she beams. Gay has staffed her boutique with neighborhood people, so they too can walk to work.

The clothes, she says, will be from the best designers Milan, Paris, New York, and San Francisco have to offer, such as Paola Frani, Chaiken, Toeca, James Jeans, Vince, and Twelfth Street.

"We are planning to have trunk shows, where a designer will bring everything

CONTINUED ON PAGE 62

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RUMORS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 61

into the store that they've created for a season. We'll have fun shopping nights where we stay open until 10 p.m. with refreshments for our customers. We'll also be offering personal shopping services, style assessments, sizes from 0 to 12, and most important, alterations." You can reach Gay by telephone at STYLE-911.

Church Street residents Abraham Amireh and Ruth Niehues will also walk to work when Amireh opens his new coffeehouse on the corner of Dolores and 26th streets. That spot has been a tax preparer's office for at least 20 years.

"The owner of the building has been very supportive, and we feel good being in such a comfortable neighborhood," says Niehues, who will manage the coffee shop. "We'll be serving coffee and pastries and have local artists' works shown on the walls, and we will be Internet-friendly," she adds.

The couple say they will unveil the coffeehouse the third week in July. "Let the name be a surprise," says Amireh.

But both are brimming over about the new venture. Says Niehues, "We'll serve the best coffee in the Bay Area, by a local roaster. And we'll be giving lots of free coffee to the neighborhood when we open."

Not only do we have another clothing boutique and another coffeehouse, but to round out the Noe Valley supply-and-demand scenario, we'll soon have another nail salon, Noe Valley Nails, on the corner of 27th and Church. It's owned by Kenny and Helen La, of Angel's Nails fame. (See Letters to the Editor, page 6.)

☎ ☎ ☎

SHORT SHIRTS: The "For Lease" sign should be up again on the vacant Mikey-

tom storefront at the corner of Church and Day, thereby ending speculation that a bakery is ready to sign a lease. Alas, the deal fell through.

Dominic Maionchi, the owner of Laundreland on the corner of 24th and Church, says he hasn't had any viable offers to lease the whole laundromat, so he'll proceed with plans to divide the space in two and extend the back, reducing parking from 11 stalls to five.

Pizza lovers, please note that Cybelle's, on 24th at Church, has changed ownership recently. Also note that Haystack and Noe Valley Pizza will now have a huge parking lot nearby. I wonder if the three have plans to validate parking.

Sushi fans will relish a new restaurant at 3299 Mission, by 29th Street, called Stray Fish. It had a grand opening June 14.

Local realtor Sue Bowie has started a web site, noevalleyonline.com, which has a good list of local restaurants with photos, for hungry Valleons who want to plan their dinners ahead of time (or pay vicarious visits while they sup on a bowl of cereal).

☎ ☎ ☎

REAL FOOD FOR THOUGHT: The likelihood of Fresh Organics reopening Real Food anytime soon seems remote. The store has been closed, ironically enough, since last Labor Day. There seems to be no progress between landlord and tenant in the dispute over who's going to pay for certain renovations. Or at least neither side will admit progress.

However, there is some interesting news emanating from Washington, D.C. When the store closed abruptly in '03, the 29 Real Food employees were trying to unionize the shop. Since then, they've filed a complaint with the National Labor Relations Board, making allegations that the closure was related to their attempts to unionize. Fresh Organics denies this.

As those of you who attended the Friends/Merchants meeting last month heard Bevan Dufty report, our member of

the House of Representatives, Nancy Pelosi, has now become involved in the dispute and wrote a letter to the NLRB in early May.

Pelosi received a reply on Flag Day, June 14, from NLRB Assistant General Counsel Nelson Levin. Levin wrote, "The alleged unlawful closure of the [24th Street] store and the mass layoffs were the focus of an intensive investigative effort by our San Francisco Regional Office. The Region has not made findings in the matter nor issued a complaint, pending review of the evidence and decision by our Division of Advice at Headquarters in Washington, D.C."

Levin further stated, "The employer [Fresh Organics] has provided evidence in response to the charge that presents a defense of business necessity, specifically, that the store was closed in order to allow a total remodel of the premises in furtherance of a new store concept."

That's not news, but Levin noted something else. "In addition, the Region has requested a supplemental position statement from the employer, in response to information we received that the anticipated remodel that was the basis for the closure may be abandoned."

It certainly does look abandoned from here.

☎ ☎ ☎

OUR ARMS PROBABLY HURT from patting ourselves on the back. The readers of *San Francisco* magazine have voted Noe Valley the "Best Neighborhood" in the Bay Area. (See the results of the magazine's "Best of the Bay Area" poll in the July 2004 issue.)

The magazine's editors wrote: "Apparently Noe Valley is the urban, Left Coast version of Lake Wobegon, where women are strong, men are good-looking, and children are above average. The weather and the general disposition seem sunny for most of the year, and eternal brunching and bookshop-browsing look like your idea of paradise."

In the same issue, local culinary star Firefly was honored as the "Best Neighborhood Restaurant Deal" in the Bay Area. "Noe Valley's Firefly, just up the hill from the busy stretch of 24th Street, offers scandalously reasonable *prix fixe* menus Sunday through Thursday. At \$29 for three courses, diners can have their pick of the entire new American menu."

On Sunday, June 13, the *Chronicle Magazine's* "Facetime," by Sam Whiting, featured the smiling faces of Josh Epple and his brother Isaac, dubbed the "Butcher Brothers." We know them better as the Drewes Brothers, who are maintaining the tradition of Drewes Meats. On Church Street near 29th since 1889, the market still has a barn out back that's been there since 1849.

Wrote Whiting, "What's unusual is that Josh is 32, and with shaved head, ear and chin piercings, and a telephone headset, looks more like a nightclub doorman. Isaac, 29, could clean up to be a reality TV star." In the article, Josh explained that he had lived around the corner and found his way to Drewes as a place to get a sandwich. He and Isaac both started working there when they were 16.

In response to the question: "How did you come to be owners of this piece of history?" Josh said, "The owner used to say, 'This place will be yours someday.' I'd say, 'Yeah, right. I wouldn't want this place even if it fell into my hands.' And sure enough, it fell into my hands!"

Isaac got off the best line of the Q & A. In response to the question "What makes a good butcher?", he said, "Ten fingers."

☎ ☎ ☎

THAT'S THIRTY for this month, dear neighbors. Have a sane and safe summer, and we'll see you back here in September. I can't resist one tip: Your summer reading list should include Richard Clarke's *Against All Enemies*. But my editor recommends *Truth and Beauty* by Ann Patchett. Well, read both. ■



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The Day Dave Died

BY ROZ LEISER

Nothing stirred in the room. I was having a hard time concentrating on the book in my hands. My back was starting to hurt from sitting on the high-backed bedside chair. As I shifted my position, trying to prop my feet up onto the empty hospital bed in front of me, I heard a gasp for breath, a rasping. I looked over at Dave. All color was gone from his face, a bone-china translucent mask. The IV still was connected to his arm. Drops of fluid fell one by one into the plastic chamber. His long body covered the whole length of the bed. His breathing became regular again, slow but rhythmic.

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THREE WEEKS AGO, after months of struggling to get his leukemia under enough control to be able to get a bone marrow transplant—months during which he continued to engage his friends, who were his support system as well as his health care providers—Dave had suddenly stopped talking, stopped eating, stopped responding to anyone.

In the face of Dave's withdrawal, we went into high gear. Dennis, Randi, Art, and I had come to L.A. to support Dave. The medical providers were almost as agitated as we were. We demanded explanations. They had none. They did tests. Nothing had changed. We were in our mid-20s. None of us knew anything about dying.

The Bone Marrow Unit at UCLA Medical Center was one of three places in the country that offered what was then an experimental procedure. It was a grim and bizarre place to hang out. Patients were given so much radiation that their immune systems were essentially killed. They lost their hair—all of it. They developed infections. They bled. They had fuzzy white thrush on their tongues. They lived in reverse isolation rooms. I looked at them through glass windows in doors that were always shut to keep out life-threatening germs. Sometimes I waved at them and they waved back. I entered Dave's room dressed in a cloth gown, paper booties, paper hat, rubber gloves, and a mask that made my breath sour when I inhaled.

During the two months we had been there, we got to know other patients' families and friends. I met the parents of a little girl on the unit. Their slumps in the waiting room told me when she had a fever; their frenetic energy as they made instant coffee signaled the antibiotics might be working. I started to think of her as little Daisy Duck when she

grew a fuzzy thatch of hair. Some of the patients died. Daisy went home, only to be readmitted the next week. When someone was discharged and didn't return, we told each other this was good news.

Dave was never able to get the transplant. He appeared to accept this last door to life slamming in his face with grace. When we moved him out of isolation, we were relieved to be able to visit and touch him without all the barriers. We weren't prepared for his withdrawal. It hurt us, made us feel even more powerless than we already were. Eventually, we surrendered to this new reality and continued to keep a vigil in his room.

Two weeks passed, and suddenly one evening he sat up and, as though he was continuing a sentence he had started only a moment before, said, "I want a pizza. I want a hot fudge sundae, I want to go outside."

I've never sat down to a more wonderful meal than that pizza. Art, Dennis, Randi, and I were all there, as blessed as if we were eating manna straight from heaven. We each had our own hot fudge sundae.

The next morning, we wrapped Dave in six white blankets—what are known in the hospital as bath blankets, usually wrapped around patients while they are given bed baths—bundled him into a wheelchair, rode the elevator to the lobby, and wheeled him out into a perfect L.A. day. Mountains that had been shrouded in smog for the first weeks I was there stood out crisply under the clear sky. Dave's big black plastic-framed glasses almost fell off his ghostly face but slipped back into place as he tilted his head back in the warmth of the sun. He smiled in delight at a golden retriever that approached the wheelchair and was grateful to be petted.

That night he fell into a coma. There was bleeding in his brain; he wasn't likely to regain consciousness, but no one could say how long he would linger. We continued the vigil in shifts. Each time my shift came, I was relieved that he was still alive and afraid that he would die while I was there.

After Dave lived through my first shift, my dread lessened. I drifted into a fantasy that somehow he would go on and on like this, a peaceful being in bed. I felt surprisingly calm as the hours passed in that still room. Occasionally, a nurse came in to change an IV, take a look, or say something comforting, but most of the time there was only the humming of the temperature control system to keep me company.

I looked around at the walls, still covered with

cards and posters. A poem by Ho Chi Minh on one began, "The wheel of the law turns without pause..." A quote from Che Guevara on another reminded me that "the task of a true revolutionary is guided by great feelings of love." On a brilliant blue background, a woman's silhouette told me, "The mountain moving day is coming...."

We were connected to Dave and each other by our political beliefs. I had cast off the religion of my childhood in favor of the politics of life on earth that so far had been our only guide for how to cope with Dave's illness. We had organized to get him into this transplant program, picketed at UC, wrote letters to the newspapers, sent petitions to the VA demanding they pay for the procedure. When Dave was first diagnosed, he wrote a poem in which imperialism was the metaphor for leukemia.

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THE HOURS PASSED and the humming lulled me. I was free of the lump in my throat that often made it difficult to swallow, the racing heartbeat, the nausea at the smell of the hospital that had plagued me since I first came here. I don't know what made me look up from my book and walk over to Dave's bed. As I looked down, I simultaneously realized that he was not breathing and felt what I can only describe as a whooshing, a sharp rush of air, a strong sense that something had gone out of the room. I looked to see if the window was open, but saw only the same sealed glass and motionless curtains that had been there all day.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Roz Leiser is an integrative health and bereavement counselor with a practice in Noe Valley. She also directs Life Transitions Network, a nonprofit organization that offers workshops on loss and transition. The death of her friend Dave took place 30 years ago and started her on her journey to becoming a nurse, working for psychiatrist and author Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, and pursuing a career helping others cope with end-of-life and bereavement issues. Much of Leiser's writing is of the academic variety, but she has published short fiction, non-fiction, and poetry in several publications, including *The Sun* and *Across the Generations*. In a constantly changing world, the Glen Park resident is grateful for the enduring existence of Herb's Fine Foods on 24th Street.



Photo by Jack Tipple

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